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Inside the private world of ANDRII SHEVCHENKO

WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN

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PLUS

FC PORTO

CARLOS TEVEZ

HENRIK LARSSON

ROMAN ABRAMOVICH and the mystery Brazil connection...

VANDERLEI LUXEMBURGO

KARL-HEINZ RUMMENIGGE

RUUD GULLIT

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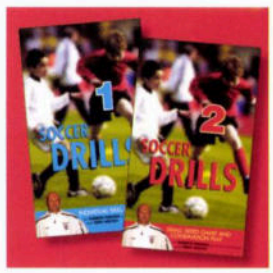

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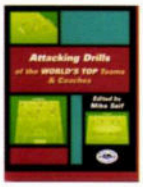

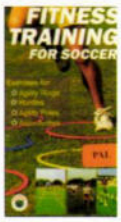

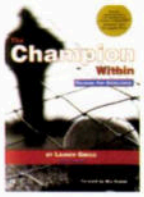

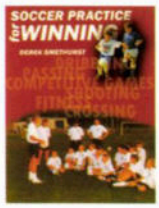

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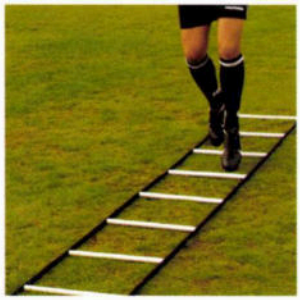

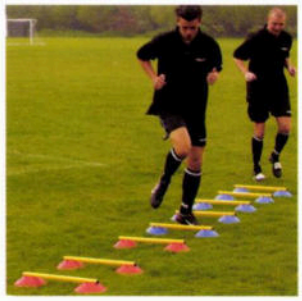

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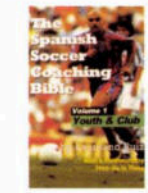

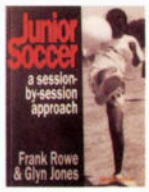

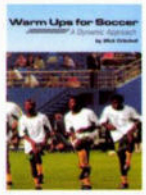

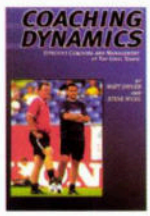

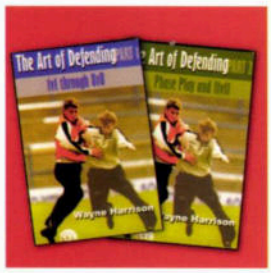

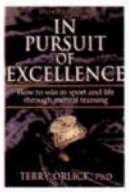

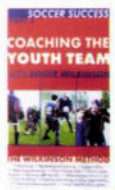

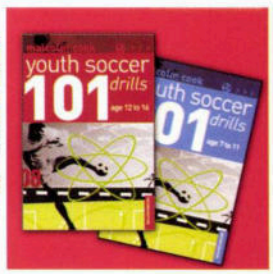

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FEBRUARY 2005

WORLD SOCCER comment

WITH ENGLISH FOOTBALL apparently absorbed in a domestic title race that threatens to be all over before Easter, it is once again *World Soccer's* duty to bring you the stories from parts of the world that others cannot reach.

At the time of writing, the biggest transfer deal of the January window went virtually unnoticed in Europe. Yet the move of South American Player of the Year Carlos Tevez from Boca Juniors to Corinthians for a continental record £10.5million fee was an extraordinary transfer in so many respects.

For an Argentinian player to be sold across the border to a Brazilian club is remarkable enough. But for Boca, the 2003 world club champions and last year's Libertadores runners-up, to sell Tevez, arguably the brightest young player in the world game, to a club as indebted and as unsuccessful in recent seasons as Corinthians beggars belief.

I would applaud the break with the tradition of Latin talent being sold to Europe – were it not for the fact that so many people in South America are suspicious of the Tevez deal, or rather who may be behind it. Corinthians are receiving Chelsea-like investment from a secretive London-based company. It is hard to dismiss as being without foundation the allegations that an Abramovich-type figure may be involved.

Whether or not Chelsea are attempting to set up a satellite club in South America may become clearer over the next few months. But they are by no means the only wealthy European club who have global designs. And yet the demise of the World Club Cup, which promised so much but delivered so little in recent years, also received scant coverage outside South America, Portugal and Japan.

To FC Porto goes the questionable honour of being the final world club champions (see page 42). But the issue of a global club tournament will not go away, especially as FIFA's Club World Championship will replace the World Club Cup from this coming December. And if Europe's wealthiest clubs continue to develop stronger commercial and financial links with their counterparts in other continents, the issue of club ownership, already highlighted by the secretive Mr Abramovich, will come under the spotlight even more.

We have made a few minor changes to the magazine with this month's issue. In our World Cup Countdown section, page 30, we begin the build-up to Germany 2006, which is already less than 18 months away. And Paul Gardner's column can now be found in an expanded Inside Soccer section, which starts on page 36. As ever, your feedback is appreciated.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor (gavin_hamilton@ipcmedia.com)

*** SAVE MONEY ON WORLD SOCCER SEE OUR SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION OFFER ON PAGE 62

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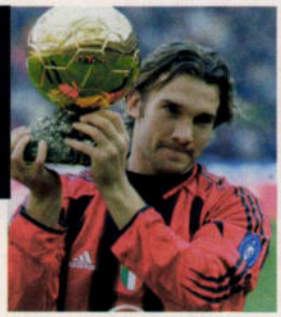
TEVEZ DEAL STUNS SOUTH AMERICA
BRAZIL: Sao Paulo side Corinthians signed Boca Juniors starlet Carlos Tevez in an extraordinary deal following a £20m investment by a mystery London-based group. **Pages 16 & 38**

SANTOS STEAL IT
BRAZIL: For the second time in three years, the national championship was won by Santos. **Page 14**

AMERICO ENJOYS DREAM ENDING
ARGENTINA: Americo Gallego quit Newell's Old Boys at the top, stepping down after leading the Rosario club to the opening championship. **Page 56**

COVER STORY
Andrii Shevchenko
Exclusive interview with the new European Footballer of the Year. **Page 22**



AZ HIT TOP SPOT
HOLLAND: AZ Alkmaar took advantage of a home defeat by PSV to go top of the Dutch League at the winter break. **Pages 13 & 46**

SCHALKE REBORN UNDER RANGNICK
GERMANY: Schalke were the form team of the autumn in the Bundesliga, winning 10 out of 13 games to go second behind Bayern Munich. **Page 44**

DEMENTED DERBY
ITALY: Lazio forward Paolo Di Canio was condemned for his 'Roman Salute' derby celebration. **Page 18**

MARINOS RETAIN TITLE
JAPAN: Yokohama F Marinos retained the J.League title after beating Urawa Reds on penalties in the title-deciding play-off. **Page 61**

NEW YEAR, NEW MADRID
SPAIN: Vanderlei Luxemburgo had an immediate impact in his first two games in charge of Real Madrid. **Page 20**

NIGERIANS KEEP THE CUP
NIGERIA: Enyimba became the first club to retain the African Champions Cup for 36 years after beating Tunisia's Etoile Sahel. **Page 58**

KARIMI CROWNED IN ASIA
IRAN: Ali Karimi continued Iran's dominance of the Asian Player of the Year award when he won the 2004 prize. **Page 60**

● 08/12/04

Stevie wonder...Gerrard's late goal against Olympiakos clinches Liverpool a place in the Champions League knockout phase

● 12/12/04

Everybody out ...Real Madrid's Bernabeu stadium is emptied with six minutes left of the Liga game against Real Sociedad following a bomb scare

● 12/12/04

Yokohama delight...FC Porto celebrate beating Once Caldas in the last ever World Club Cup Final

HEADLINERS

VANDERLEI LUXEMBURGO

Real Madrid have turned to the volatile Brazilian coach

REAL MADRID'S MOST successful recent coach, Vicente Del Bosque, was all crumpled suits and low profile. The new man could hardly be more different.

Vanderlei Luxemburgo comes equipped with an extravagant wardrobe – an illustrious compatriot once remarked that it was difficult to take seriously a man who boasted about owning 200 silk shirts. And Luxemburgo will never be a shrinking violet.

"I'm an idol," he said after taking Santos to the Brazilian title, his fifth championship win. "I've become a role model for young coaches, people admire my work, and companies invite me to give lectures." Recently he addressed Brazil's first coaches' forum, speaking at length of the importance of the group, about the need to put 'I' at the service of 'we'. Behind the stage there was a huge photo of him celebrating – alone – with the legend: 'Vanderlei, the great winner.' He is too wrapped up in himself to see the contradiction.

He concluded in a ferocious rant of Social Darwinism. "I want to win," he yelled, "I want my opponent to die." At the time Santos were fighting for the title against Atletico Paranaense. "I want Atletico to die," he went on, adding the curious rider, "with ethics and professionalism."

It was an uncomfortable moment. Two Brazilian players had just dropped dead on the field. Luxemburgo's words were in appalling taste, but he was reminding Brazil's next generation of coaches how hard it will be to take his place.

It was also a moment that took the audience straight to the soul of Luxemburgo. It revealed the depth of his will to win, the force that has taken him from a broken home in Rio's poor periphery, the desire that makes him able to commit his entire being to the quest for success, the resilience to bounce back from setbacks and scandals that would have ended the careers of many.

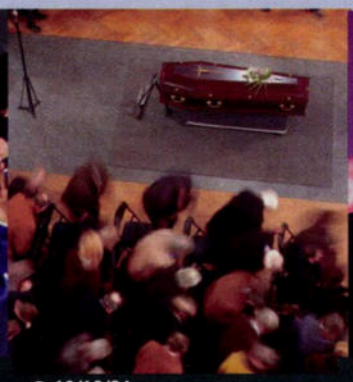
> **'I'm an idol, a role model for young coaches. People admire my work'**

But it also made glaringly obvious the lack of balance that has played such a part in those scandals and setbacks – the age fiddle during his playing days, his controversial financial affairs and chaotic two years in charge of the national team.

It will be fascinating to see which Luxemburgo the Madrid job brings to the surface. Will it be the victorious club coach, with clear ideas, command of the group and superb substitutions? Or will it be the floundering Brazil boss, full of technobabble and half-digested phrases from self-help books?

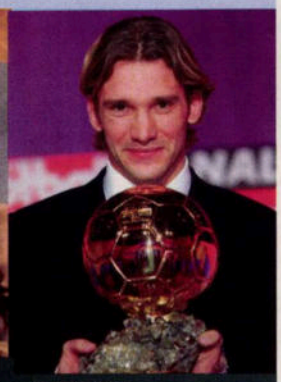
Handling the mature superstars of the European game will require less of the authoritarian approach so common in Brazil. He often places his defensive line far deeper than is usual in Europe, while having so many high-profile attacking options brings pressures and problems he has never faced before.

Tim Vickery



● 13/12/04

Adieu...Belgian football pays its last respects to the late Raymond Goethals



● 13/12/04

Golden boy...Shevchenko is named 2004 European Footballer of the Year

CARLOS TEVEZ

THE YOUNG ARGENTINIAN was voted South American Player of the Year for the second year running and was also involved in a highly controversial transfer from Boca Juniors to Corinthians of Brazil (see page 16).

Tevez won 76 votes in the annual poll organised by Uruguay's *El Pais* newspaper, ahead of compatriot Javier Mascherano on 56. Brazil's Robinho and Argentina midfielder Luis Gonzalez tied for third on 37.

ALI DAEI

THE IRAN STRIKER was honoured by FIFA at the World Player of the Year gala in Zurich after he became the first player to score more than 100 international goals. Daei, 35, scored four in Iran's 7-0 defeat of Laos in a recent World Cup qualifier to take his tally to 102.

FERNANDO REDONDO

THE ARGENTINA midfielder announced his retirement as a player six months after leaving Milan, where he had been troubled by a serious knee injury.

"I've decided to spend a relaxed year in Madrid, but next season I will go back to work in something related to football," said Redondo. "I've received quite a lot of offers to continue playing, but I've decided to live in Madrid and I don't want to move my family."

Numbers game

24...

the number of points Brazil's Sao Caetano had deducted for fielding defender Serginho, who died during a match against Sao Paulo. A disciplinary tribunal said the club knew he had a heart condition.

100,000...

the fine (in Swiss francs) imposed by FIFA on the Spanish FA for home fans' racist abuse towards England's black players during the Madrid internationals between Spain and England last November.

150,000...

the fine (in Swiss francs) imposed by UEFA on the English FA for home fans' racist abuse at the Euro 2004 qualifier against Turkey in Sunderland in April 2003.

9,789...

the fine (in euros) imposed by UEFA on Real Madrid for their fans' racist chanting against Bayer Leverkusen's black players during a Champions League match last November.

12...

the amount of time (in hours) it took for Real Madrid to announce that they would be appealing against the UEFA fine.

165,000...

the reported cost (in pounds) of the customised Bentley Arnage T David Beckham gave his wife Victoria as a Christmas present.

● 15/12/04

Top dogs...Stuttgart beat Dinamo Zagreb 2-1 to win Group G and reach the UEFA Cup knockout stages

● 17/12/04

Trophy at last...Boca Juniors celebrate their only silverware of 2004 after beating Bolivar of Bolivia in the Final of the Sudamericana Cup

● 17/12/04

Luck of the draw...Real Madrid will face Juventus in the tie of the Champions League first knockout round

Tsunami: football responds

A WORLD ALL-STARS match, on February 15 in Barcelona, heads the international game's response to the tsunami that has claimed more than 100,000 lives around the Indian Ocean. The 'Football for Hope' benefit match, organised jointly by FIFA and UEFA, will feature a team captained by Ronaldinho and coached by Carlos Alberto Parreira and Frank Rijkaard against a side led by Andrii Shevchenko, with Marcello Lippi and Arsene Wenger as co-coaches.

All proceeds will be donated to the Tsunami Solidarity Fund, which has been set up jointly by FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation.

FIFA president Sepp Blatter sent a letter of condolence to presidents of the football associations of affected countries, including Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, India, Maldives, Malaysia and Myanmar.

The world body also donated £1.4million to the federations of each affected country for general relief and redevelopment projects.

Several European players – including Italy's Filippo Inzaghi, Alessandro Nesta and Marco Materazzi – were among those who returned home with harrowing tales of how they managed to escape to safety after the tsunami rolled in.

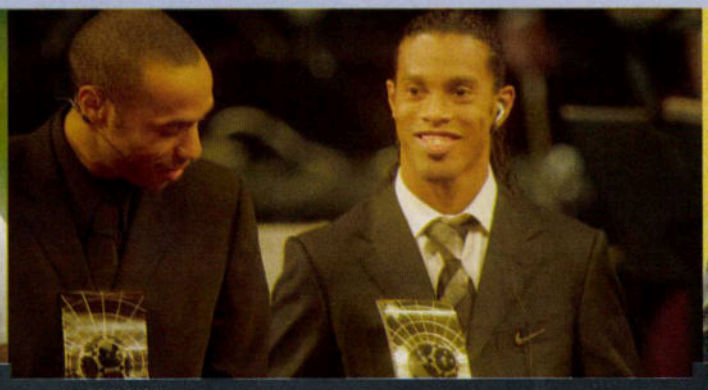
Disaster-relief fundraising projects around the football world include:

Chance to give...a donation box has been placed in Real Madrid's club shop

- **The 20 English Premiership clubs have jointly donated £1m.**
- **Manchester United and Charlton doubled their initial £50,000 contributions to £100,000.**
- **Everton, whose main sponsor, Chang, is based in Thailand, added proceeds from a supporters' collection.**
- **Arsenal were among clubs who gave 20 per cent of the revenue of programme sales.**
- **The German League pledged £1m.**
- **Bayern Munich donated £200,000 towards a rebuilding project in Sri Lanka.**
- **Bayern sponsor Deutsche Telekom gave £650,000.**
- **The Asian confederation has pledged an initial £700,000 to help rebuild football infrastructure in the affected countries.**
- **In Italy, the *Gazzetta dello Sport* newspaper opened a disaster relief fund into which Serie A clubs contributed £150,000.**
- **Roma and Lazio players auctioned off their shirts to raise cash after the derby, as did players from Milan and Internazionale.**
- **Lazio accepted a proposal from veteran goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi to donate all internal club fines until the end of the season to the fund.**
- **Valencia have offered to stage a special derby game against Levante for the cause.**
- **Real Madrid launched a joint project with a Spanish international aid agency to collect money among fans from donations and a memorabilia auction.**
- **Juventus have pledged £200,000 towards an orphanage project in Thailand.**
- **The Italian leagues have sent £250,000.**
- **A match between Turkey and a Turkish League Imports XI will be staged in Istanbul on February 2.**
- **Hertha Berlin have promised a staggered investment of £150,000.**
- **Surprise UEFA Cup contenders Alemannia Aachen will donate £1.40 for each ticket sold for the home leg of their tie against AZ Alkmaar.**

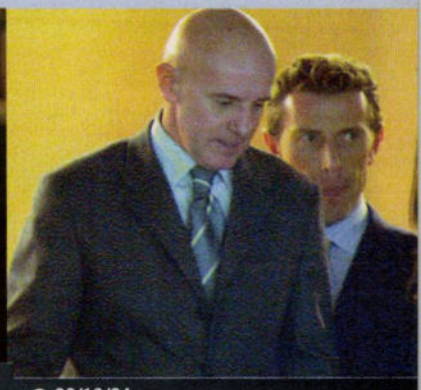
● 19/12/04

Top that...Francesco Totti celebrates scoring a club record 108th Serie A goal for Roma



● 20/12/04

Second best...Arsenal striker Thierry Henry is beaten by Barcelona's Ronaldinho in the FIFA World Player of the Year award in Zurich



● 22/12/04

New man in town...Arrigo Sacchi is the surprise appointment as Real Madrid's new sports director

GOOD MONTH FOR...

Simply the best...Ronaldinho

Ronaldinho...the Barcelona star added the FIFA World Player award to his growing collection of personal accolades at a gala night in Zurich. See World Service for full vote results.

Irvin Khoza...named as chairman of South Africa's organising committee for the 2010 World Cup finals. Khoza, a hugely influential figure in South African soccer, is also chairman of the South African Premier League, a vice-president of the South African Football Association and owner of Soweto club Orlando Pirates.

German beer...which will be served at World Cup venues in 2006 after all, following an agreement with tournament sponsors Anheuser-Busch, brewers of American beer Budweiser.

Tynecastle...which will remain the home of Hearts for the foreseeable future after 72 per cent of the Scottish club's shareholders voted to reject a £20million offer from a property speculator.

Qatar...winners of the Gulf Cup for the second time after a penalty shoot-out victory over Oman.

BAD MONTH FOR...

Paulo Diogo...the Servette midfielder who was forced to have his left ring finger amputated after a goal celebration went horribly wrong. The recently-married 29-year-old jumped up on the perimeter fence in celebration after setting up his team's third goal in a 4-1 win at Schaffhausen. But he failed to notice that his wedding ring was caught in the metal barrier and severed the top two joints of the finger as he jumped back down. To add insult to injury, Diogo was shown a yellow card for his excessive celebration.

Luis Fernando Montoya...the Colombian coach behind Once Caldas's success in last year's Libertadores Cup was left paralysed from the neck down after being shot twice as he tried to protect his wife from muggers outside his home. Montoya stepped down as Caldas coach after last month's World Club Cup Final defeat by FC Porto in order to spend more time with his family.

Sebastian Gonzalez...the Atlante striker was banned for four matches for dousing a linesman with water after being sent off in his club's 2-1 defeat by Tigres UNL. The game was part of the eight-team tournament held in the USA to find Mexico's remaining two representatives for this year's Libertadores Cup.

Paralysed...Montoya

Joao Vale e Azevedo...the former Benfica president was jailed for 18 months for falsifying documents relating to the sale of pitches belonging to the club. Vale e Azevedo recently served three and a half years for embezzlement.

Notes & quotes

"You don't become quicker with age. Let's stop all this speculation about me playing for Germany again."

Bayern Munich midfielder Mehmet Scholl, now 34, says media pundits calling for him to be recalled by Jurgen Klinsmann are wasting their time.

"I am Exeter till I die. And this game has made sure there will be an Exeter when I die."

Ian Huxham, the Exeter City managing director, reveals the importance of his team's 0-0 draw at Manchester United in the FA Cup third round.

"There are 10,000 players better than him. He is only here to sell shirts. As a footballer, he never existed."

Atletico Madrid's Marcelo Sosa gets his retaliation in early against David Beckham – ahead of the derby with Real.

"It was much harder than the World Cup. I went five days without eating."

Former Italy striker Toto Schillaci on taking part in a TV reality show set on a tropical island.

● 24/12/04

Gulf classic...Qatar lift the Gulf Cup on home soil after beating Oman on penalties in the Final

● 26/12/04

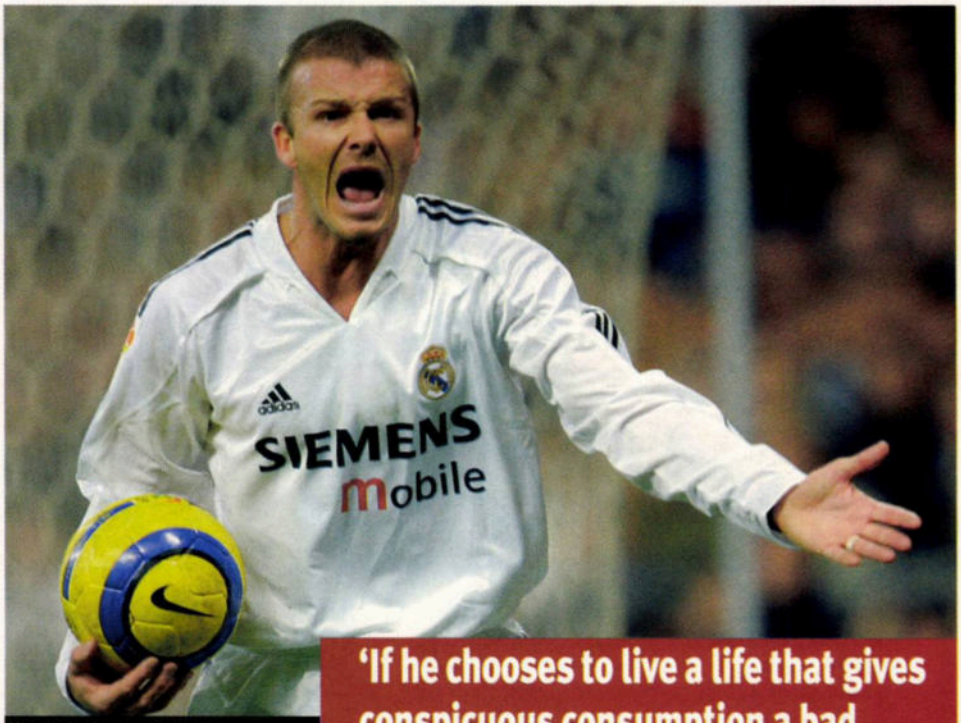
Drama queen...Bolton defender Tal Ben-Haim falls to the ground after being pushed in the face by Wayne Rooney

● 28/12/04

Power games...Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi announces he is stepping down as Milan president

WS WORLD SOCCER Brian Glanville

...on how Beckham's latest moan is a bit rich...Keegan's rough ride at Belgrade airport... Luxemburgo's Real deal...and a begging letter to colleagues



Public laments...Beckham

'If he chooses to live a life that gives conspicuous consumption a bad name, how can he logically object to perpetual publicity, good or bad?'

POOR little rich boy! Poor (well figuratively) put-upon, misunderstood David Beckham. Scarcely had he been taken off at half-time at the Bernabeu by Real Madrid, in the match lost humiliatingly 1-0 to Sevilla, hardly had the echoes died from his monumentally flamboyant 'christening party' for Brooklyn and Romeo, than he was publicly lamenting the way he was criticised whenever he made the least mistake.

This from the footballer who, despite his mediocre form, was able to put on a jamboree that entailed a 350ft-long marquee, the reconstruction of the derelict Irish church where he and Relatively Posh Spice had been married, not to mention the arrival that morning at Beckingham Palace of two cars that cost in excess of £165,000.

Beckham really cannot have it both ways. If he and his wife choose to live a life that gives conspicuous consumption a bad name, how can they logically object to perpetual publicity, be it good or bad?

IT was most interesting to read, from the Government papers of 30 years back which have just been released, that no official apology was demanded from the Yugoslav government when our own was trying to

● 29/12/04

Arrigo, meet Vanderlei...Real Madrid vice-president Emilio Butragueno (centre) introduces his club's new signings, Sacchi (left) and Luxemburgo

● 01/01/05

Great timing...substitute Joe Cole celebrates his late winner against Liverpool at Anfield which keeps Chelsea well clear at the top of the Premier League

'I was actually there when the brutal beating up of Kevin Keegan took place at Belgrade airport'

secure the release of a couple of hapless plane-spotters who had been banged up there, absurdly accused of being spies rather than naive nitwits.

The revelation reminded me of my own visit to Yugoslavia at around the same time. I was actually there when the brutal beating up of Kevin Keegan took place at Belgrade airport in somewhat bizarre circumstances. It would never have happened had the tour guide only realised that there was a one-hour time difference between Sofia, where the England team had just played and won, and Belgrade, where they were due to meet the Yugoslavs.

This meant that the England party, plus us journalists, arrived one hour earlier than we had been expected. Hence there was no one there to meet us, either from the British embassy or from the Yugoslav football federation.

Dressed in casual clothes, and, in the case of left-back Alex Lindsay, fooling about on the carousel, there was nothing to distinguish the players from a bunch of ebullient young tourists. So it was that poor Keegan, sitting, apparently still air-sick, quietly on his own, was suddenly assailed by a little man in a shabby brown suit, who endeavoured to wrench a brown paper parcel of presents out of his grasp. Keegan swore at him, whereupon the man summoned a large policeman in grey uniform and jackboots who seized Keegan at one end, while the little security man grabbed the other, and bore him away to be maltreated in a nearby room.

Keegan was beyond all doubt the innocent party, which did not prevent one of our Greatest Living Sports Columnists – no names, no pack drill – who wasn't within hundreds of miles of the incident, to write a bombastic piece, declaring that it served English footballers right for their louche behaviour.

Returning later to Belgrade, I was told by the British ambassador that only in that city could such a thing have happened. In the 'Free West', there were no such restricted zones in which Keegan had unwittingly found himself, while in the Soviet Union and the other Iron Curtain countries, they would be so rigorously shut off that they could not be penetrated.

But Keegan did have a kind of revenge: he scored for England in the subsequent 2-2 draw against Yugoslavia.

REAL MADRID'S appointment of Vanderlei Luxemburgo as their new manager seems an imaginative choice. Quite why they also need Arrigo Sacchi as so-called club manager – supposedly to deal with transfers and the like – I'm none too sure.

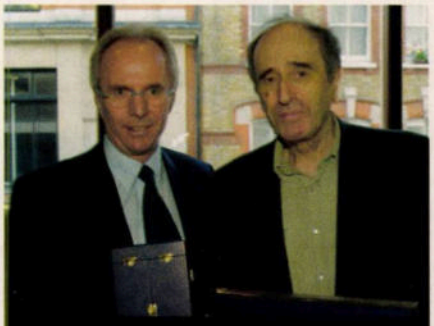
Luxemburgo, of course, won a string of titles with the best clubs in Brazil, most recently the championship with Santos. But he did not flourish during his time as national coach and was ousted after Brazil failed to win the 2000 Olympic tournament.

Before that Luxemburgo had shown remarkable survival skills in the Brazil job. Things had looked bleak when an ex-girlfriend blew the whistle on him for alleged tax offences and supposedly taking commissions on the sale of players when he was a club manager. But the clouds cleared and he remains supremely bankable.

It does look as if he will be followed to Real Madrid by Santos' gifted young attacker Robinho. He celebrated the release of his mother from a 40-day kidnap ordeal by helping Santos beat Vasco da Gama 2-1 on the final day of the season to win the title. But if he does indeed come to the Bernabeu, the embarrassment of riches in attack will be greater than ever.

One does fear for Michael Owen, who so clearly made a move wrong for both himself and Liverpool, but who has typically soldiered on through early frustration and viciously unfair criticism in the Spanish press to show his mettle. David Beckham? Will Vanderlei have the patience and the ability to revitalise him?

FOOTBALL writers and commentators are by no means the only miscreants, but far too many have fallen prey to an increasingly common and maddening misuse of language. Comrades: TO BEG THE QUESTION does not, not, not mean TO RAISE, POSE OR PUT THE QUESTION. What it does mean is TO ASSUME SOMETHING IS CORRECT THAT HAS NOT BEEN PROVED. Example: "To call Bobby Charlton the finest of all England centre-forwards begs the question of whether he was a centre-forward at all."



Brian Glanville recently received the Jules Rimet award from FIFA, presented by Sven Goran Eriksson, in recognition of his attendance at 12 World Cups

Read Brian Glanville's weekly column at www.worldsoccer.com

● 03/01/05

Paying their respects...Malaysia and Indonesia players remember the victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami with a minute's silence before their Tiger Cup semi-final, second leg

● 05/01/05

Back at Bayern...Bixente Lizarazu makes a surprise return to Munich

● 05/01/05

Penalty...Ronaldo is fouled in Real Madrid's 'six-minute match' against Real Sociedad

WS WORLD SOCCER

Jim Holden

No solution in sight

Video replays could cause as many problems as they solve

ALL AROUND EUROPE good men of football are worrying about the effect on the game of wall-to-wall live TV coverage. Attendances across the continent are worryingly down, while cynicism is dramatically up. Over-exposure on television has undoubtedly become a serious threat to the good health of soccer.

It has created another damaging side-effect, too – the demand by many leading figures, from FIFA president Sepp Blatter downwards, for the introduction of video technology to ensure that poor refereeing decisions are eliminated.

This is a seductive proposition. Who wouldn't want an end to dodgy offsides and the missing of blatant handballs in the box by unsighted or incompetent officials?

Sophisticated technology and instant video replays are used in other sports, from tennis to cricket and rugby. So why not the world's most popular and wealthy game?

If only it were so simple.

Those, like myself, who shy away from widespread use of TV footage during games to 'assist' referees are not Luddites or flat-earthers or any other kind of cheap insult chucked around with casual abandon by people who should know better.

It would cause at least as many problems as it would, allegedly, solve. It would create even more aggravation between players on the pitch and managers on the touchline than already exists in our over-hyped game.

Fine-line decisions

In those other sports, their use of technology is reserved merely for line decisions. By and large this works, although even the evidence is not always conclusive. Controversy and perceived injustice is not always removed.

Nevertheless, there is a strong case for international soccer to introduce this limited brief for video assistance for referees. Did the ball cross the line? Was it a goal? Technology is sufficiently adept now to make this worthwhile – and such line-calls are rare enough not to interrupt the general flow of a football match, which does not have the natural breaks of cricket or rugby.

Scoring goals is the point of soccer; they are a matter of fact rather than conjecture.

The recent Manchester United v Tottenham fixture in the Premiership where a clear goal was missed by poorly-positioned officials (through no fault of their own) is a prime example of how replays could be of benefit. They would also have been beneficial in the 2002 World Cup quarter-final between Spain and South Korea, when the Spanish were denied a goal because of a mistaken call over whether the ball had gone out of play or not.

All about opinions

Line decisions work. But the matter should stop there, as it has in cricket, for example, which has resisted technology on issues that are the opinion of the umpire.

It would be even more tricky in the fast-moving game of soccer, where so much of refereeing is about interpretation and opinion.

Handballs? Was it hand-to-ball or ball-to-hand?

Offside? Was the player active or passive?

'Line decisions work but the matter should stop there, as it has in cricket'

Dives in the penalty area? Was the contact with a defender sufficient to cause the fall? And was it a foul?

All this is about judgement. And if the widespread use of video replays was introduced, think of how much aggro it would cause with players and managers and crowds constantly badgering the ref to watch a re-run.

The behaviour of players towards refs is already generally appalling. And my belief is that it would become intolerable if video replays were sanctioned.

Rugby and cricket have levels of player conduct that soccer can only dream of. They accept the cruelties of sport as part of the game. They accept that total elimination of injustice in sport is an impossibility.

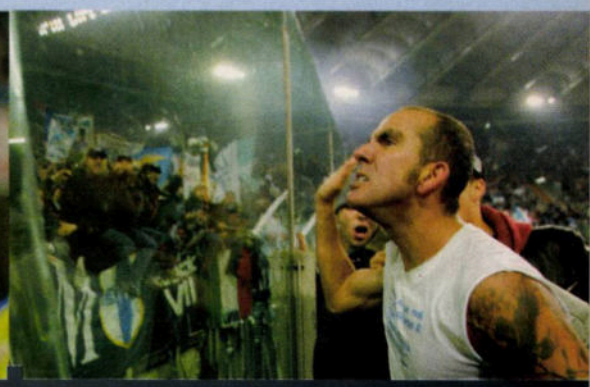
Footballers should do the same.

● 06/01/05

Hernan the hero...Crespo scores a hat-trick in Milan's 5-2 defeat of Lecce as Serie A resumes after the Christmas break

● 06/01/05

CSKA Moscow to Chelsea...Jiri Jarosik is the latest arrival at Stamford Bridge



● 06/01/05

Eye of the storm...Lazio's Paolo Di Canio causes outrage after celebrating his side's Rome derby win with a fascist salute

The lowdown on...

AZ ALKMAAR

Antiquated...AZ's Alkmaardehout stadium

Why all the fuss?

Well, it's not every day that one of Dutch football's Big Three (Ajax, Feyenoord and PSV) is not top of the table at Christmas. The AZ class of 2004-05 are only the third team from outside the Big Three to become winter champions since 1963, the only others being AZ themselves in 1980 and ADO Den Haag in 1970. AZ have a tradition of upsetting the apple cart. Their League title in 1980-81 was the last occasion a non-Big Three outfit prevailed in the Eredivisie. Once upon a time, Alkmaar, a city of 90,000 inhabitants in the north-west of Holland, was famous only for its cheese market. Now it's also home to the most entertaining football team in the country.

What's their stadium like?

Best not ask. The rather antiquated Alkmaardehout in the south of town holds little more than 8,000 and if AZ qualify for next season's Champions League, there is no chance of UEFA allowing them to play there. Work recently started on a new 23,000-capacity home ground called the Kooimeer Plaza, though it will not be ready until 2006-07.

Who is the powerbroker?

The club president is Dirk Scheringa, the multi-millionaire owner of the DSB banking and insurance group. Highly ambitious, his aim is to turn the Dutch Big Three into a Big Four.

What's their history?

They are a relatively young outfit, formed in May 1967 by the fusion of two failing Second Division sides, Alkmaar 54 and FC Zaanstreek. AZ 67 became a major force in Dutch football in the late 1970s and early 80s, funded by a major cash injection from wealthy businessmen Klaas and Cees Molenaar, who ran a big Dutch household equipment firm. With a host of leading Dutch players brought in, AZ won the Dutch Cup three times (1978, 1981 and 1982), the domestic championship in 1981 and were runners-up to Ipswich Town in the Final of the 1981 UEFA Cup. However, the glory days were not to last. The debts piled up and the club were relegated. They returned to the top flight in 1998.

Who picks the team?

Fifty-seven-year-old coach Co Adriaanse, who has been in charge of AZ since October 2002. He made his name during a five-year stint as the director of the much-celebrated Ajax youth academy (1992-97) before taking charge of Willem II – whom he led into the Champions League in 1999 – and the Ajax first team from July 2000 to November 2001.
He recently caused consternation in Alkmaar by refusing a contract extension and announcing he would leave the club in June. Fancies a job abroad, with England or Germany the most likely destinations.

What's the Adriaanse philosophy?

He's a perfectionist, a standard-bearer for attacking football and totally committed to the idea that the collective good of the team comes before any individual. His basic but unanswerable assertion is that the opposition can't hurt you if they are pinned back in their own half. Insisting on lots of movement and width, his favourite formation is 4-3-3 but at times this term he has gone for broke with four men up front. He is not solely a footballing romantic. He has also succeeded in adding greater fighting spirit and tactical awareness to AZ.

Who are the main men at AZ?

Danish striker Kenneth Perez, their leading scorer this term with 10 goals, has done a sterling job up front, splendidly supported by two fellow front-runners – Belgian international Stein Huysegems and ex-Feyenoord man Robin Nelisse. The heartbeat of the team, though, is found in midfield, where Barry Van Galen and Denny Landzaat provide vision, superior passing ability and goals. Arguably the most impressive performer in the Eredivisie this season, Landzaat is reported to be on the wanted list of Ajax and PSV. Keeper Henk Timmer and defenders Jan Kromkamp, Barry Opdam and Joris Mathijsen deserve a mention too.

What are their chances of going all the way?

It will be tough. They only lead PSV on goal difference, and Ajax, five points further back, certainly have not said their last word in the race. AZ will no longer have the element of surprise working for them in the spring and Adriaanse's decision to quit in May could leave a power vacuum. They are also still in the UEFA Cup – facing German side Alemannia Aachen in the next round – and Europe may prove a distraction.

Nick Bidwell

Santos steal it

Luxemburgo sets record with title number five

BRIAN HOMEWOOD in Rio de Janeiro

FOR THE SECOND time in three years, the Brazilian championship has been won by Santos. And for the second year running, it has been won by a team coached by the irrepressible Vanderlei Luxemburgo.

Last year, Luxemburgo led Cruzeiro to the title. This year, he was fired in February after falling out with the directors, took over at Santos four games into the championship with the team in 17th place and rebuilt the side as they went along.

Santos eventually finished three points ahead of Atletico Paranaense, who led with two matches to go until they lost to Vasco da Gama in unsavoury circumstances.

At the other end, former South American champions Gremio were relegated along with Vitoria, Guarani and Criciuma. On a dramatic final day, several other traditional clubs escaped by the skin of their teeth, notably Flamengo, Atletico Mineiro and Botafogo.

For Luxemburgo, who left Santos for Real Madrid just after the triumph, it was a record fifth Brazilian championship with four clubs, his other titles coming with Palmeiras in 1993 and 1994 and Corinthians in 1998.

As far as the coach's ego is concerned, even being pelted with missiles is a sign of admiration. Luxemburgo had previously been in charge of Santos in 1997 but walked out on the club when he received a more attractive offer from Corinthians. After that,

Ours again... Santos players lift the championship trophy for the second time in three years

he was greeted with chants of "mercenary" and pelted with coins on subsequent visits to the Vila Belmiro.

"The fact that they threw coins at me just showed that they liked me and were sad that I had left," he said to general bewilderment. "They hostilised me but they did it with affection."

Despite all the reservations about the way Luxemburgo had treated the club seven years ago, Santos president Marcelo Teixeira had no reservations about bringing him back for another try last May. He replaced his great personal rival Emerson Leao, who led the club to first place in 2002, second place last year and the 2003 Libertadores Cup Final.

Luxemburgo arrived to the sound of ringing cash registers as Santos were busy dismantling their team. Midfielder Renato was on his way to Sevilla, teenage playmaker Diego left for FC Porto and central defender Alex departed for PSV Eindhoven.

Their replacements were an apparently motley mixture of untried youngsters, journeymen professionals and players whose careers had taken a dip.

Eighteen-year-old defender Leonardo was blooded into the first team, and Preto Casagrande, relegated the previous year with Bahia, was given Diego's playmaker role. Luxemburgo also raised eyebrows by signing defenders Cristiano Avalos and Antonio Carlos, midfielder Ze Elias and forward Basilio, all players who had drifted fairly aimlessly from club to club in the past few years.

But it was the signings of midfielder Ricardinho and striker Deivid that made the biggest impact. The former was a reserve in Brazil's 2002 World Cup squad who had since spent a miserable year with Sao Paulo and then a disastrous six months with Middlesbrough, where he did not get a single kick of the ball in the first team. The latter played under Luxemburgo at Cruzeiro last year and was leading scorer in the Brazilian championship until he joined Bordeaux.

Astute leadership

All the newcomers, however, had one thing in common: they had Luxemburgo's confidence. Furthermore, nearly all the other teams in the championship were in the same boat after selling their players, but none had Luxemburgo's astute leadership.

After forcing their way up the table, Santos spent the last two months of the championship playing musical chairs with Atletico Paranaense at the top.

Luxemburgo pursued his target ruthlessly, refusing to be distracted by the Sudamericana Cup – he infuriated Globo television by fielding a reserve team – nor even the six-week long kidnapping of the mother of Robinho, Santos' and indeed the championship's top player. Forty-three-year-old Marina de Souza was snatched by two armed men from a barbecue in the Santos neighbourhood of Praia Grande one Saturday evening. She was kept captive for 40 days before being released unharmed, apparently on payment of a £40,000 ransom, two days before Santos' last game. During this time, Robinho was kept out of the team.

Atletico led with two rounds of matches to play and could have wrapped up the title if they had beaten Vasco da Gama away and Santos failed to win at Sao Caetano. But Vasco themselves needed to win to guarantee First Division survival and were prepared to go to any lengths to stop Atletico completing a lap of honour on their turf.

Pre-match riot

The game was preceded by a riot outside as hundreds of Atletico supporters were denied entry to Vasco's Sao Januario stadium, despite holding tickets. They accused the club of selling too many tickets. Meanwhile, more coachloads of Atletico fans were stopped from approaching the stadium to avoid further trouble. Inside the ground, Atletico were prevented from warming up on the pitch. Despite this, Brazil's disciplinary tribunal, which has been happily slapping home bans on teams because cups of water have been thrown on to the field, took absolutely no action against Vasco.

The hosts won 1-0, defender Henrique heading home a free-kick, and their notorious president Eurico Miranda celebrated their win, and top-flight survival, by jumping on the assistant referee's table.

Santos, meanwhile, comfortably beat a demoralised Sao Caetano 3-0 to go one point clear at the top. Their opponents had just had 24 points docked for fielding defender Serginho earlier in the season when, according to Brazil's sports disciplinary tribunal, the club knew he had a heart condition. The defender died on the pitch during a game against Sao Paulo in October.

Santos' victory left them needing to also beat Vasco to clinch the title. The Rio side, after their Herculean effort the week before, returned to the mediocrity that had marked most of their campaign. Vasco's showing was hardly helped by the axing of Serb Dejan Petkovic, their one inspirational player, after he failed to agree terms for the renewal of his contract.

Robinho's return added to the pre-match euphoria and it was no surprise when Santos, forced to play hundreds of miles away in Sao Jose do Rio Preto as they served their third home ban of the

Flipping furious...Palmeiras' defeats angered fans

● Sao Paulo police claimed a major breakthrough in the fight against hooliganism when they apprehended 200 flip-flops. The sandals were confiscated from members of the notorious Palmeiras supporters group the Mancha Verde, or Green Stain, who had intended to hurl them at the players in a symbolic protest. The MV were furious after home defeats against relegation-threatened Flamengo and Guarani effectively ended Palmeiras' title challenge. They said the flip-flops represented the "sandals of humility" that the players needed to wear.

'The fact they threw coins at me just showed that they liked me'

Luxemburgo puts an interesting spin on his former treatment by Santos fans

championship, settled matters in less than half an hour. Ricardinho floated home a free-kick to open the scoring in the fifth and Elano headed a second goal in the 30th. Vasco pulled one back in the second half through Marco Brito but Santos won 2-1.

Atletico's campaign petered out with a 1-1 draw at home to Botafogo but the exploits of striker Washington had provided the most romantic story of the year. Washington, who is diabetic, resumed his career last February after undergoing two operations for blocked arteries. He ended the campaign with a record-breaking 34 goals.

Atletico badly missed the trickery of the injured Dagoberto in the closing stages of their campaign but it was their failure to prepare themselves for the Vasco game that ultimately cost them the title.

At the bottom, Atletico Mineiro, Flamengo, Botafogo, Criciuma and Vitoria all went into the last day fighting to avoid the drop, Guarani and Gremio having

'Washington hit a record 34 goals'

already been condemned. Atletico, who fired coach Mario Sergio with three matches to go and brought in Procopio Cardoso for a fourth stint at the club, guaranteed survival with a 3-0 win over Sao Caetano. Botafogo's point away to Atletico Paranaense, combined with Criciuma's 3-3 draw with Coritiba and Vitoria's 2-1 home loss to Ponte Preta, kept them in the top flight on the day 40-year-old ex-Paris Saint-Germain and Brazil midfielder Valdo played his farewell match.

Flamengo thumped Cruzeiro 6-2, helped by non-existent defending from their opponents, who generously fielded nine reserves. Flamengo had managed to overcome all their off-field chaos as they went through their last five matches unbeaten. Their 2-1 win at Palmeiras proving the turning point.

But the outlook is hardly bright. Two days after the end of this campaign, Junior, the 1982 and 1986 World Cup player, quit as Flamengo's technical director because, he said, he was fed up with interference from the so-called amateur directors. His place was taken by Gerson Biscotto, whose previous job in charge of the club's rowing department hardly qualifies him for the role.

Meanwhile, Andrade, who guided Flamengo through their last eight games in his third stint of the season as caretaker manager, was shabbily pushed aside and replaced by Julio Cesar Leal.

Tevez signing stuns Brazil

Argentina star joins Corinthians after deal with mysterious investment group

THE OLD SAYING that "if it's too good to be true, it probably is" sprang to mind as Corinthians plunged into a £20million partnership with a London-based investment group, Media Sports Investments, then forked out more than half of that on Argentinian prodigy Carlos Tevez from Boca Juniors.

Tevez was signed for £10.5m, a record transfer between two South American clubs, less than a week after the controversial deal between the club and the mysterious MSI had been cemented.

Corinthians president Alberto Dualib, who in the past two years had become more used to angry supporters protesting outside his house over bad results, was euphoric with a deal he believes will make his team invincible.

Tevez, complete with a grin that leaves Ronaldo trailing in the goofiness stakes, was unveiled at a gala dinner. He was quickly forgiven for turning up in flip-flops at the black tie event and even for saying he considered Maradona better than Pele.

After a year during which more than 800 Brazilians were exported, the country could hardly believe that they had poached the most exciting young player of their greatest footballing rivals.

Like most other Brazilian clubs, Corinthians had been swimming in debt until MSI and their Iran-born president, Kia Joorabchian, popped up. They had employed five different coaches in just over a year and one of them, former World Cup defender Junior, had walked out after 10 days when he realised the size of the task facing him.

MSI has promised to provide an immediate cash injection that will allow Corinthians to pay off their £12m debt as well as making signings their rivals can only dream of. At press time, the club had also signed striker Vagner Love from CSKA Moscow and were eyeing Porto's Brazilian midfielder Carlos Alberto, World Cup winner Denilson and Tevez's compatriots Juan Roman Riquelme and Javier Mascherano. The latter would be another major coup. Mascherano last year established himself as a regular in the Argentina midfield at the age of 20, playing with a maturity beyond his years.

But there are plenty who fear it will all end in tears. Many Corinthians directors believe the terms of the deal, which include 51 per cent of profits going to MSI, have cost the club their independence. They have also questioned Joorabchian's motives and say not enough is known about MSI or the origin of the money.

Tevez regrets?

Tevez could soon find himself wondering whether he has made the right move, especially when the harsh realities of the Paulista state championship hit him. This, plus the opening rounds of the Copa Brasil, are all he has to look forward to in the next four months since Corinthians failed to qualify for the Libertadores Cup.

After being chased around Buenos Aires by the paparazzi, Tevez says he is leaving Boca Juniors for some peace and quiet. However, Sao Paulo, with its endless traffic jams and alarming crime rates, is not the usual place people go to chill out.

Neither can Corinthians supporters, especially the notorious Hawks of the Faithful group, be described as undemanding. It was a group of Corinthians fans who blocked the main highway into Sao Paulo, then ambushed the team bus and pelted it with stones back in 1997 because they were unhappy with the team's performances.

Many of Tevez's troubles in Argentina stemmed from visits to nightclubs. If he decides to sample Sao Paulo's nightlife, past experiences suggest that he can expect to be spied on by members of the Hawks, who will monitor how late he stays out and whether or not he has a drink.

● *See also Inside Soccer, page 38*

Final act...Tevez celebrates his last goal for Boca – during the victory over Bolivar in the Sudamericana Cup Final

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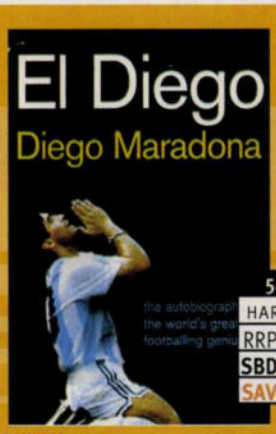

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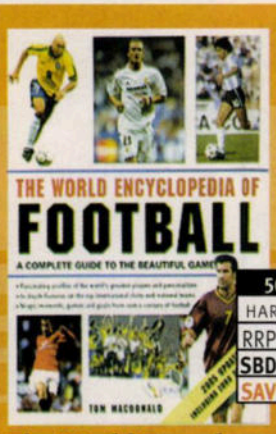

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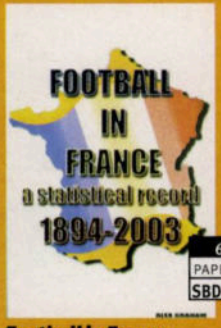

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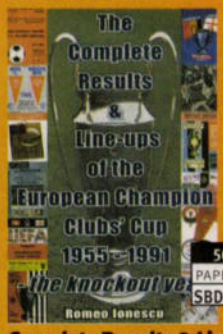

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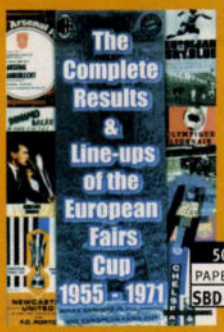

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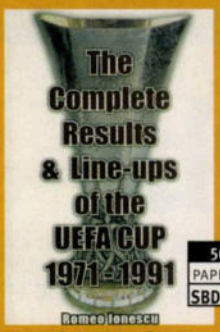

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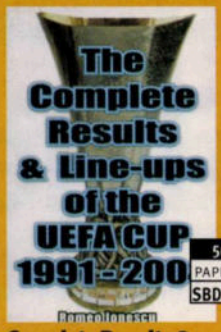

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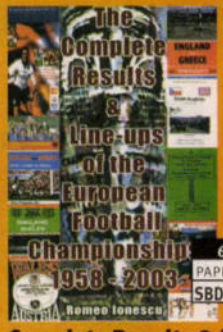

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Straight arm tactics...Di Canio gives his controversial salute to Lazio fans at the end of the Rome derby

Demented derby

Di Canio is condemned for his 'Roman Salute' celebration after Lazio's defeat of Roma

PADDY AGNEW in Rome

IF YOU WERE hoping for peace, prosperity and tidings of comfort and joy in the Italian New Year, you would have been sorely disappointed. It was perhaps inevitable that with a January 6 Rome derby the year would soon be marked by fierce tensions and drama.

The key figure in the dramatis personae was one Paolo Di Canio, Lazio's prodigal son cum standard-bearer who returned this season to his very own alma mater after years in the English wilderness. Born in the tough Rome neighbourhood of Quarticciolo, Di Canio is a *laziale* through and through, someone who is just as much a club fan as a club player.

To underline that point, he accepted a significant wage drop to return to Rome for what looks like being a lively Indian summer to his successful career. Initially underused by coach Mimo Caso (it was suggested that he was less than 100 per cent fit, a suggestion he vehemently denies), 36-year-old Di Canio gradually played his way back into the side.

So much so that, concluding this column last month, I suggested that if there were to be a Lazio revival in 2005, it would have to start with Di Canio. Put simply, the side badly needed his passion and commitment to the cause.

Come the Rome derby, Lazio got all of that and a lot more from Di Canio as he proved to be the major protagonist. Given that this year's derby came after the Christmas/New Year break, we had a de facto two-week-long build-up to the match, allowing for both sides to engage in a deal of psychological warfare.

Totti v Di Canio

Roma captain Francesco Totti opened exchanges by saying that he really did not know nor did he want to know Di Canio. To which the Lazio man replied cheerfully: "Totti is quite right not to invite me to dinner. If I started talking to him about the Middle East, he would think I was referring to a midfield position."

On and on went the bantering to the point that when the teams took to the pitch at a packed Olympic stadium, tension and tempers were already simmering. It would clearly take little for them to reach the boil.

It says much about Di Canio's attitude to the game that under his light blue Lazio shirt, he wore a T-shirt bearing a Samurai inscription that read: "There is only one way to return from a battle – either with your enemy's head or without your own."

Adding spice to the preparations was the fact that Roma went into the game strong favourites, having ended 2004 with a sumptuous 5-1 drubbing of Parma. Lazio, in contrast, went into the match just above the relegation zone and on the back of an emphatic 3-0 drubbing by Udinese that had cost coach Caso his job, with former Siena coach Giuseppe Papadopulo in as his replacement.

Come the game, Lazio turned all the expert predictions on their heads in an emphatic 3-1 win in which Di Canio not only opened the scoring with an exquisite goal but also proved himself man of the match. In the circumstances, 16 years after his first appearance in a Rome derby, Di Canio was always going to go overboard in his post-match celebrations.

This he duly did not only by gesturing at the Roma fans (it was a Lazio 'home' game) but also when greeting the Lazio fans with the infamous straight arm 'Roman Salute', much used and loved by the Fascist regime of *Il Duce*, Benito Mussolini. At that point, all media-driven, politics-driven hell broke loose.

In vain Di Canio protested that his gesture had no political significance, that it was merely a "heat of the moment" celebratory thing. Others thought otherwise. For a start, *Il Duce*'s granddaughter, Alessandro Mussolini, a current MP at the head of her own right-wing party, expressed her pleasure, saying: "How great it was to see that Roman salute, absolutely intriguing. I will have to write Di Canio a letter of thanks."

To which Di Canio promptly replied with a formal statement in which he claimed that his post-match celebrations "had nothing to do with any type of political opinion, in particular the type of politics referred to by Mrs Floriani". Significantly, Di Canio used Mussolini's married name rather than that infamous surname.

As the debate raged, Di Canio received as much support as he did criticism. Enzo Foschi, head of Rome city council's sports commission, called the gesture "a matter of shame for football, for the city of Rome and for the club Lazio", while former Roma and Lazio coach Zdenek Zeman condemned Di Canio for having behaved like a hardline 'ultra' fan.

In contrast, though, Milan coach and former Roma player Carlo Ancelotti argued that such gestures were all part of the derby rivalry. Meanwhile, Juventus goalkeeper Gigi Buffon pointed out that when Totti had jeered Juventus players last season by holding up four fingers to indicate the four goals by which Juve were losing, nobody had made much of it.

Milestone...Paolo Maldini

● Twenty years ago, on January 20, 1985, Milan coach Nils Liedholm, short of fit players in a Serie A game against Udinese, launched the first-class career of arguably the outstanding Italian player of his generation, Paolo Maldini, then a mere 16-year-old.

Today, Maldini is still among the best defenders in Serie A and what is more he is still playing for Milan, the one and only club of his illustrious career. Looking back over the years, Italy's most capped player (126) recently suggested that the sort of debut he made would be impossible today.

"I started at 16 because, with a couple of players injured, there was a chance. Today, all the big clubs have 25 or more players; it makes it very, very hard to get a break."

In the meantime, Di Canio's autobiography was hurriedly pulled off the shelf and dusted down with a keen eye on his words of praise for Mussolini. The implication of some commentaries was that Di Canio is a fascist thug, with the definitive proof being the word *Dux* (Duce) tattooed on his arm.

In the end, a definitive judgement on the matter will come (probably in mid-February) from the football federation's investigations committee, due to analyse the episode with a view to the charge of bringing the game into disrepute. Italy's special police services unit, Digos, is also looking into the affair.

Italy's hottest game

One thing is for sure – nine months after the last Rome derby was postponed and later replayed because of apparent player intimidation by Roma fans, the fixture has once again confirmed itself as the hottest in Italian football.

Outside Roma, the biggest splashes were created not by the top two, Juventus and Milan (who are in a league of their own), but by a number of coach comings and goings either side of the holiday break.

Atalanta coach Andrea Mandorlini had already gone in mid-December, replaced by former Lecce coach Delio Rossi. Next to go, on the eve of the break was Parma coach Silvio Baldini, replaced by Pietro Carmignani. Two days into 2005 and another two coaches, Franco Colomba of Livorno and Gigi Simoni of Siena, had bitten the dust, replaced respectively by former Milan player Roberto Donadoni and Gigi Di Canio. In all, six Serie A coaches have been sacked or have resigned so far this season.

Not all of these sackings seemed logical. In particular, both Colomba and Simoni appeared to be doing reasonable jobs in difficult circumstances. Expressing his sympathy with his colleagues, Milan coach Ancelotti commented that, unfortunately, "we coaches are sometimes in the hands of club directors and owners who simply are not competent".

Ancelotti, of course, should know since his boss, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, has never been afraid to intervene directly in the affairs of Milan – most memorably in the spring of 2001 when, in the midst of a frenetic general election campaign, he ordered the sacking of coach Alberto Zaccheroni after watching Milan's elimination from the Champions League.

Ancelotti's comments gave rise to no small amount of debate, with many of his colleagues expressing their agreement. One club owner who clearly does not agree is Giuseppe Coccimiglio of Third Division Foggia. In the first week of January, he sacked his coach, Giuseppe Giannini, replacing him with himself. Furthermore, on his debut on the bench, he 'led' Foggia to a win over Reggiana.

In fairness, though, Coccimiglio did admit that much of the credit for the win should go to the "advice" given him by senior team player Giovanni Stroppa. Mind you, Coccimiglio could be on the way to establishing a dangerous precedent. We will watch closely to assess just how long his tenure on the bench lasts.

One final thought concerns the January announcement by federation president Franco Carraro that Italian football has secured government backing for its intended bid for the 2012 European Championship finals. If Italy were to land this plum, argued Carraro, it would represent a golden opportunity to renovate Italy's sadly outdated stadia.

And so say all of us.

'It's a matter of shame for football, for the city of Rome and for Lazio'

Enzo Foschi, head of Rome city council's sports commission

New year, new Madrid

Luxemburgo checks in after another game of musical chairs at Real

SID LOWE in Madrid

WHEN RONALDO and Roberto Carlos boarded a plane to Madrid on December 29, Christmas turkey still weighing heavily on their bellies, they came across a familiar face. Much to their surprise, former Brazil coach Vanderlei Luxemburgo was on the same flight.

"Are you going to Madrid on holiday?" the players asked him, to which Luxemburgo responded with a smile: "No, I'm going there for a job. I'm going to be a coach in Madrid. Your coach, in fact."

The following day, with the vast majority of Madrid's players still none the wiser, Luxemburgo was presented at the Santiago Bernabeu alongside sporting director and new vice-president Emilio Butragueno and Madrid's recently appointed director of football, Arrigo Sacchi.

And once again, the world was watching, which appears to be the way they like it. It is as if Real Madrid can't bear the thought of people not talking about them for a few days. Just when you thought it was safe to enjoy Christmas, to take your eye off Madrid for a moment, they had done it again.

Never mind that little over a week before, Madrid president Florentino Perez had insisted he was delighted with Mariano Garcia Remon or that he had talked about the coach continuing until the end of the season and beyond. Never mind that when Garcia Remon replaced Jose Antonio Camacho, Perez said he would be a new Vicente Del Bosque, the caretaker boss who lasted three years and won two European Cups before being unceremoniously

Short introduction ...Luxemburgo (right) looks on as his new charges prepare to play the remaining six minutes of the game against Real Sociedad

dumped having been told he could renew his contract "whenever he wanted". Never mind that; the moustachioed former goalkeeper was out, Luxemburgo was in.

Perhaps we shouldn't have been surprised. After all, Perez had famously translated "si" as "never, never, never" when asked if he was going to sign David Beckham. He also loves to talk about handling things with *naturalidad* – normality. And what's normal at Real Madrid these days is a change of coach: Luxemburgo was Madrid's third in three months, their fourth in little over six.

Garcia Remon too weak

Besides, despite some initial optimism, Garcia Remon had lost the confidence of the players and the board. He was too weak a personality – albeit Madrid wanted a return to the understated club man model – and results did not follow. At boardroom level, too, patience was wearing extremely thin over the poor physical shape of Madrid's players. The pampered, lazy galacticos legend was back and Madrid needed a manager who would sort them out.

Yet as Garcia Remon not unreasonably pointed out: "It was a difficult challenge and I don't think I did that badly. It's clear that the squad is unbalanced and if we didn't do better maybe it is because we couldn't."

Maybe, but Garcia Remon's position was weak and was undermined still further by the arrival of Sacchi. This was widely considered a prelude to the coach's departure; what few anticipated was how quickly that would occur. But, then, Perez was on the warpath – not just about results, but also because blame had begun shifting towards him. When Madrid were defeated 1-0 by Sevilla in the last game before Christmas, fans pulled out the white hankies and voiced their discontent once again – the difference was that this time they turned to the director's box to do so. Perez was, at last, the man in the eye of the storm.

The decision to replace Garcia Remon – who, like Camacho before him, was offered a pseudo-post at the club, which he is unlikely to actually take up in any practical sense – was taken by Sacchi and Butragueno. "I spoke to some friends in Brazil and they recommended Vanderlei," said the Italian.

That is the official version, anyway. More suspicious minds see the pair as a shield for Perez, another layer of protection. Perez has felt isolated since the departure of sporting director Jorge Valdano at the end of last season. However pointless Valdano's role appeared to be in terms of team planning – Perez simply signed whoever he liked – it was he who faced up to the media, with his characteristic eloquence hiding the fact that he wasn't actually saying much. It was he who kept Perez out of the firing line.

Besides, nothing happens at Madrid without Perez's say-so, while Butragueno actually recalled Sacchi from his holiday to sign Luxemburgo, which rather suggests that he wasn't exactly on the case himself. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that things are changing at the Bernabeu, that there is a realisation mistakes have been made, the galacticos policy was unsustainable and that a more professional structure is called for.

At last, decisions may be made on a more footballing basis. It is remarkable how long it has taken. Perez, a construction magnate, would never build a house without an architect, yet for years he thought he could run a football team without the input of anyone who knew the game. Now Madrid are buying what they need: at the time of writing, they were looking towards signing a tough central midfielder to belatedly replace Claude Makelele, with Thomas Gravesen heading the list. Rumours that they are looking to offload David Beckham, Michael Owen and Jonathan Woodgate, though, are completely unfounded.

Ronaldo embarrassed

Things have changed at team level, too, for now at least. Luxemburgo announced that his secret would be "discipline, unity, hard work and professionalism". It was much the same message as that offered by Camacho at the start of the season. Likewise, Luxemburgo's decision to get the players training twice a day. This was applauded in the press, especially when Ronaldo, looking rather big, was publicly embarrassed, trailing miles behind his team-mates in one session. Few mentioned that Garcia Remon had already planned a kind of mini-training camp for after Christmas. Luxemburgo was the man.

"Ronaldo's going to suffer," Luxemburgo announced. "The players' rights will end where mine begin." But if that sounded like the kind of rhetoric that led the dressing-room to turn against Camacho, Luxemburgo does appear to have changed the atmosphere at the club. The players respect him. "This guy knows what he's doing," said one first-teamer. "Luxemburgo is a tough man – and that's great news," added Beckham.

So far, the change has borne fruit too. In just 12 days under the new coach, Madrid clawed back six points on leaders Barcelona, even if they did come from two bizarre victories. First, Madrid clinched a 2-1 win thanks to a 92nd-minute penalty by Zinedine Zidane during the six remaining minutes of the bomb-threat abandoned match with Real Sociedad surreally played out 24 days after the Bernabeu evacuation. Then, with Barcelona losing 3-0 at Villarreal, Madrid defeated Atletico Madrid by the same score despite being utterly dominated and putting only three shots on target.

"I'm happy with the result, but not the performance," said Luxemburgo. Well, it's a start.

Mersey beat...Morientes

● Fernando Morientes became the highest profile transfer of the January window when he left Real Madrid for Liverpool in a £6.3million deal. "I'm going to Liverpool with all the enthusiasm in the world," he said. "I've spent eight years at this club, including one on loan at Monaco. I'm going with a cupboard full of trophies." Morientes revealed he turned down a late offer from Lyon, adding: "I gave my word to Liverpool and as I had played a season at Monaco I didn't want to go to a rival club. I had already packed my bags for Anfield."

'Luxemburgo's a tough man – and that's great news'

David Beckham appreciates the newcomer at the helm

Sheva's

In an exclusive interview, newly-crowned

Andrii, during the short break in the Serie A matches for Christmas you decided to spend time in Ukraine with a special mission.
Yes, several years ago I visited an orphanage school in the town of Pereyaslav-Khmelnitsky, not far from Kiev, to donate equipment they needed to care for the destitute children. This time round, my partners and I took football kits, sports shoes and footballs. I also have a plan to build a sports orphanage school in Kiev, where children can develop their football skills.

This would be in recognition of the way you started in football?
I never forget my football roots. I was spotted by Kyiv Dynamo youth scout Alexander Shpakov just playing out the back from where I lived. He travelled regularly across Kiev with the sole purpose of discovering new talent. He noticed me during one of our games, which were like wild battles, and invited me to the Dynamo sports school. I was brought up in a family with a modest income and my first coach convinced my parents that football was my future.

Did you dream of following in the footsteps of your famous compatriots, Oleg Blokhin and Igor Belanov?
It was exactly these two players, as well as Alexander Zavarov, who were my role models. It was easy to imagine myself as Belanov or Zavarov because as a member of the Dynamo youth team I had to work as a ballboy at the first-team matches. So I had plenty of opportunities to observe their skills from the edge of the pitch.

Up front...Shevchenko in World Cup action against Georgia last October

world

European Footballer of the Year Andrii Shevchenko talks to Oleg Zadernovsky

You reached the peak of your career at Dynamo under the great coach Valerii Lobanovskyi. Did he transform your football vision?
I'll always remember my first meeting with Lobanovskyi. His opinion about my skills and prospects of playing at the highest level were vital for my development as a player and as a person. He was one of the greatest coaches in world football.

Do you still feel his influence?
He will always be in my soul. Lobanovskyi was more than a coach for me. I pay tribute to him for all my achievements. I brought the European Champions Cup to his monument in Kiev last year and I'll do the same with the Ballon d'Or [the European Footballer of the Year award just won by Shevchenko].

Milan face Manchester United in the next round of the Champions League. What was your first experience of British football?
The Dynamo Under-14 team took part in an international youth tournament in Aberystwyth, in Wales. We won the competition. I was named the best player and received a pair of boots from legendary Liverpool forward Ian Rush. Funnily enough, the boots were too small for me but I still tried to play in them – until my big toes poked through.

What do you expect from the United games?
I think Manchester United are a very strong team. It's not good for Milan to play them at such an early stage of the competition. Both games will be fiercely competitive. As for me, I tend to play better the stronger the opponents are.

Why is that?
Probably everything depends on my concentration. I've always played in the most important matches with a great desire to win and with the maximum possible effort.

There has sometimes been talk about interest in you from Real Madrid, Manchester United and recently Chelsea. How do you react to the speculation?
Such talk and rumours always exist around big players. Of course, it is a pleasant thing that such clubs pay attention to me but Milan is where my home is. I dreamt of playing in Milan from the age of 15 when I visited the San Siro stadium for the first time. I feel excellent in Milan and would like to carry on playing there until the end of my career.

Have you ever met Roman Abramovich?
Yes, I met him recently. As far as I understand it, Chelsea is not for him simply an investment project but something much bigger.

What is the secret of your goalscoring success?
I love football, it's such a huge part of my life. I give it everything, and nobody judges my game as severely as I do. I'm always trying to find defects, even in small details that others would hardly notice.

Do you set yourself a goals target at the start of each season?
No. I'm a team player and the success of my team is more significant for me than any personal success.

'I'm dedicating my Ballon d'Or to the Ukrainian people. I think every Ukrainian boy can see from my example that in life everything is possible'

Lobanovskyi once said you have the ability to always be where the ball is. What is your best position?
Lobanovskyi considered that any player, regardless of his position, must always help his team-mates in any part of the field. His lessons were very important to me. At Milan I move about the whole pitch. I'm not just a forward who can only score goals.

What is your biggest remaining ambition?
The most important task for me now is to reach the 2006 World Cup finals in Germany with Ukraine. I will simply not consider my football career as complete if we don't qualify for the most prestigious football competition in the world.

What has Oleg Blokhin changed about the national team?
He has changed the mentality of our young players. It is very important in modern football to have self-confidence. I think it is very good if the coach has a good relationship with the players. We are leading our group now but it is too early to predict what will happen. We have very strong opponents but the atmosphere in the dressing-room is very positive, and that makes me quite optimistic.

By the way, Blokhin said that your goals for the national team, especially against Turkey, proved crucial in the voting for the Ballon d'Or.
To score goals in Serie A and World Cup qualifying matches is not easy. For several years I've been among the contenders and finally in 2004 I've received the Ballon d'Or. I'm dedicating my victory to all the people of Ukraine. I think every Ukrainian boy playing football can see from my example that in life everything is possible. But you need desire, hard work and self-belief.

Have you discussed the situation in your World Cup qualifying group with your Milan team-mate Jon Dahl Tomasson?
No, we don't talk about it. I know perfectly what the match will be like between Ukraine and Denmark – a real battle!

How do you relax?
My favourite way to relax is to play golf with my friends.

2004 was very special for your wife and you…
Yes, of course. My wife Kristen gave birth to our son Jordan. I would like him to be a football player and I'm even ready to be his first coach!

What do you think about the latest political events in Ukraine?
My politics is to play on the football field. The greatest reward for me is to provide football fans with good football emotions.

You've stayed quite a long time in Italy. Are you now Ukrainian or Italian?
I'm Ukrainian and proud of it but I speak Italian practically all the time. Even to express thoughts for me it is easier in Italian than in my native language.

What's your motivation now after your success in 2004?
I know my career will end some day. My biggest motivation is to play on at a professional level for as long as possible.

● *Overleaf: Shevchenko's life and times*

All Italian boy

Paddy Agnew assesses Shevchenko's impact in Italy

ON THE EVENING that Andrii Shevchenko was presented with the European Footballer of the Year award in December, a rather special phone call from Italy came into the Paris television studios of Canal Plus where, as usual, the awards ceremony was being held. On the line was Italian Prime Minister and Milan owner Silvio Berlusconi, delighted to get away from the polemics of political life in order to join in the celebrations of one of his favourite footballing sons.

"You are a champion, Andrii, on and off the field. You are an example for everyone," Berlusconi said in more than acceptable French.

Media tycoon, football entrepreneur and powerful politician, Berlusconi loves nothing better than to project a winning image. In that context, with the possible exception of Marco Van Basten, no footballer has more pleased him or better served his purpose than Shevchenko. Indeed, so highly does Berlusconi rate Shevchenko ('Sheva' as Italians call him) that he has in the past summoned him for diplomatic service. In November 2002, on the day after the Ukrainian scored the winning goal in a Champions League tie with Real Madrid at San Siro, the Prime Minister opted to celebrate the feat by inviting Shevchenko to a gala banquet held in Rome the following evening in honour of visiting Ukraine state president Leonid Kuchma.

The reality about Shevchenko is that Italian shakers and makers find it hard to keep their hands off him. Since his arrival in Italy from the Valerii Lobanovskyi academy of Kyiv Dynamo in summer 1999, Sheva has done little wrong.

His soft-spoken, unassuming manner, his baby-face good looks and his willingness to learn and adapt all meant he slotted into Italian life immediately. On the field, he ended his first season in Italy as leading Serie A scorer with 24 goals – the first time this had been done by a 'new entry' foreigner since Michel Platini in 1982-83.

I recall visiting Milan's training headquarters at Milanello during Shevchenko's first Italian autumn. Already, he had made a favourable impression on team-mates, with captain Paolo Maldini prophetically telling me: "If a player of his class and ability can be so keen to learn and work so hard, then there's no knowing where he will end up. Certainly, he's already one of the best around, and by the looks of him he'll get better."

Jumpers for training

Alberto Zaccheroni, the Milan coach at that time, recently recalled his initial impression of Shevchenko, telling *Gazzetta dello Sport*: "I remember that he turned up at Milanello on the first day off that I had given the players. But I had told the staff not to give him either his training gear

Paying homage...the forward lays a wreath and presents the European Cup, just won with Milan in 2003, at the statue of late Dynamo coach Valerii Lobanovskyi in Kiev

or a ball, so he just started to run up and down by himself on the pitch in his jeans and jumper."

Another who has been impressed by Shevchenko is fashion mogul Giorgio Armani. In June 2001, he invited the forward to model for him and from there the friendship between the two developed into a business relationship. They jointly opened an Armani shop in downtown Kiev in October 2002.

Like many others, Armani has always claimed to have been won over by Shevchenko's modest, discreet manner. Nor does the legendary designer have reason to complain about his Ukraine investment. So well have things gone with the Kiev shop that last November a second one was opened, officially inaugurated by Shevchenko, of course.

The Ukrainian's involvement with Armani has influenced the player's private life even more than his bank account. For it was in the world of high fashion that he met his wife, 28-year-old American Kristen Pazik, a former swimmer and model and the daughter of an ex-Major League baseball pitcher.

The couple were married on July 14 last year in Washington DC, and three months later, their baby boy, Jordan, was born in Milan. It says something about Shevchenko that at the time of his European Player of the Year win, he repeatedly said that the best thing to happen to him in the year had been the birth of Jordan. He and Kristen, he says, intend to have a large family.

The birth of Jordan also prompted a major change in the Shevchenko lifestyle, with the couple opting to move from central Milan, where he, his parents and sister had lived since his arrival in Italy, out to Lake Como, on the border with Switzerland.

Golden goals

If Sheva is popular with Milanese high society, not to mention advertising executives, he is even more popular with the Milan fans. For them, he represents gilt-edged security when it comes to goals.

Right from the beginning, he has been a prolific scorer for Milan, getting off the mark in his very first Serie A game, away to Lecce (he still rates this his favourite goal). He also scored in arguably Milan's most important win during his period with the club, hitting the winning penalty in the all-Italian Champions League Final against Juventus in 2003.

When *Gazzetta dello Sport* held a recent Shevchenko 'open day' at their office, fans from all over Italy, from as far away as Palermo in Sicily, turned up for the chance to meet their hero. The forward, true to his nature, sat down with the fans for an hour, answering questions and signing autographs.

"I'm happy to give a little of my time to people who show me this kind of affection. I'm not pretending, either; that's the way I am," he commented after his session with the fans.

It may be stretching things a bit to suggest, as former Inter and Juventus striker Aldo Serena has, that Shevchenko is the sort of player who can help fans "refind the lost core values of football".

What is certain is that Shevchenko is at home in Italy, especially in the city of Milan, a point underlined by Van Basten, his illustrious predecessor in the Milan attack, who recently commented: "He's quite simply an extraordinary player, a man for the San Siro."

LIFE & TIMES – ANDRII SHEVCHENKO

Hitting home...Shevchenko scores the winning penalty in the 2003 Champions League Final

September 29, 1976 Born in Kiev, Ukraine. Grows up with father Nikolay (an army officer), mother Lubov (an accountant) and sister Helena

1986 Joins Kyiv Dynamo youth school

1992 Brought into the Dynamo first-team squad by Vladimir Onichenko

October 1994 Makes his senior debut for Dynamo and plays 17 League games that season

December 1, 1994 Scores his first senior goal, against Dnipro, and then six days later scores in a Champions League group match as Dynamo lose 4-1 to Bayern Munich

April 1995 Makes his debut for Ukraine in a European Championship qualifier against Croatia (lost 4-0)

1996-97 Helps Dynamo retain their Ukrainian League title, scoring six goals in 20 matches. Named Ukrainian Player of the Year despite having missed the first three months of the season with a knee injury

November 1997 Scores a first-half hat-trick in Dynamo's stunning 4-0 Champions League victory over Barcelona at Camp Nou

June 1998 Helps Dynamo to another League and Cup double with 19 goals in 23 appearances

1998-99 His prolific partnership with Serhii Rebrov continues to bear fruit. After topping their Champions League group, Dynamo beat holders Real Madrid in the quarter-finals, but lose to Bayern Munich in the semis

June 1999 Moves to Milan in a £16million transfer from Dynamo. He leaves Kiev with five Ukrainian League winners' medals, three Cup-winners' medals and having scored 60 goals in 117 League games and 20 goals in 28 Champions League matches

May 2000 Finishes his first season in Italy as League top scorer on 24 goals

May 2003 Scores the decisive penalty in the shoot-out as Milan win the all-Italian Champions League Final

December 2003 Scores his 100th Serie A goal

May 2004 Finishes Serie A top scorer on 24 goals as Milan win their first title since 1999

July 2004 Marries American model Kristen Pazik

December 2004 Voted European Footballer of the Year in the *France Football* poll

Great strides...in action against Arsenal in 1998

Living dangerously

In a rare interview, the Sweden and former Celtic striker tells Johanna Gara about his new life in Barcelona

THE PAST 12 months have been hectic for Henrik Larsson. The former Celtic star made an eagerly awaited comeback to the Swedish national team and played at Euro 2004. He then signed for one of the world's biggest clubs, Barcelona, and soon became a Camp Nou sweetheart. On November 20 he played his first game against Real Madrid – but it ended in despair after 72 minutes when his studs caught in the grass and he fell badly. At first it did not seem so serious but a scan revealed three injuries to cartilage and ligaments in his left knee. He will probably not play again this season.

How are you coping with your injury?
I know what it is like to have a long-term injury and I know I'm capable of working hard to be fit again. I'm obviously not happy about what happened but that's life and that's football.

You underwent surgery in the United States in December.
Yes, it seemed to go well and I'm just hoping it can help me carry on playing the game I love. And I'm grateful to Barcelona for extending my contract by 12 months so I can focus on my recovery programme without any added worries.

How do you approach that programme?
Whatever part of the recovery process is down to me I will work at 100 per cent. In situations like this you can either lie down and feel sorry for yourself or fight hard to get fit. For me there is no option. If it is in my power to get better I will.

Let's talk about Barcelona. We hear it was your favourite club when you were younger.
Well, I have always liked Barcelona but they weren't my only team – we watched a lot of English football on television as well. But when I was 16 I started to watch the European Cups and soon Barcelona were playing with Koeman, Stoichkov, Laudrup and Romario etc in the squad. They had a great team and were fun to watch.

How did you end up playing for Barca?
To be fair, I was just waiting for this to come along. I had offers from a lot of clubs but I had only one of them in mind. At the same time I had to be realistic, I was 32 and I did not have a contract with Celtic any more. I wanted to go to Spain and everybody knew that. I told my agent before Euro 2004 that I didn't want to hear anything while I was playing for Sweden. Barcelona got in touch during the same week we lost the quarter-final to Holland and the following week I signed.

You talked of playing in the Swedish Third Division for your hometown club, Hogaborg. Was that ever going to happen?
Yes, if nothing interesting had come up I would have gone home. When you get to my age you need a big challenge – something that motivates you and that makes you feel the extra joy you need to continue. Since there are so many trips and days away from the family I was prepared to go home if the right offer didn't come along. Our house is ready so it would not have been a difficult choice.

As a foreigner, do you appreciate Barca means more than just sport to Catalans?
You just have to go out and play once in front of the home crowd to understand how big this club is. I am beginning to understand more and more the longer I am here. I can tell that the fans are very proud but it is difficult to take it all in so quickly. I will learn about its history but it will take time. It was the same at Celtic. At the same time, I am here to play football, not for the political side of things.

How has your everyday life changed?
Well, it is not just a matter of coming here only to play football – there are many things that need to be arranged and the family must be happy as well. I was so lucky to have Giovanni [Van Bronckhorst] who sorted out the house for me immediately so that we only had to stay in a hotel for one week. As soon as you have a home then you can start to build up your life again. I like routines – for example, I like to know that Jordan goes to school, Janelle to kindergarten and my wife to her horses. When you have safe ground to stand on then it is easier to take the ups and downs on the football pitch.

Are you and your family happy so far?
Yes, but during seven years in Scotland we got to know the neighbours, we made friends at my wife's stable and we built up a social circle. That takes time and we have not had time to start socialising yet. The weather is fantastic, the tempo is slower and it fits me perfectly – that way I can stay in bed a little bit longer. We haven't got used to dining late though. My wife and I have been out to eat a couple of times and when we get to a restaurant at 9pm we are always the only ones there. But we usually have dinner earlier so we can have some time together after the kids have gone to bed. Playing matches at 10pm is also new to me but I kind of enjoy it.

Are training sessions different at Barcelona?
I thought we had well-balanced training at Celtic. It is the same here. We trained a bit differently in Scotland; for example, a lot of two-goal matches. Here we do more passing exercises and work on technique. It is a lot of fun – new and inspiring.

Then you don't miss the tough Swedish pre-season training?
No, it borders on idiocy. The season goes on until late October and you have November off. Then training starts the following month and continues until Christmas. During January, February and March the only thing you do is go jogging outdoors. So no, I don't miss it at all.

You are featured a lot in the press – do you ever read it?
During the last seven or eight years I have read as little of it as possible. I look through the Spanish papers sometimes but I don't understand anything. But I know when I have played well and when I haven't. I don't need someone else to tell me I have played badly. And it is dangerous when a player starts to believe that he is as good as the press says. I have been raised to keep my feet on the ground.

Well, most of what has been written is positive. And the fans seem to love you...
That's nice. I don't know why. I guess I am pretty honest in the way I play. I will always give 100 per cent for the team even if I don't have the best of days personally. That's the way I have always played. But I am the first to acknowledge that everything gets easier if people like what you do.

At Camp Nou you are greeted by a level of cheering few Barcelona players have enjoyed.
It is very special and not something you get used to. I almost get embarrassed when I run on to the pitch and I don't know what to do with myself. It was the same at Celtic Park – and not everyone gets the same welcome. I am proud if they like what I do. Against Shakhtar Donetsk I came on and missed a few chances and still they sang my name. The week after I scored in the 1-0 victory over Numancia – and it felt like I gave something back to the fans.

What do you think of [coach] Frank Rijkaard?
He was a great player, something that doesn't always guarantee success as a coach, but he has made the transition. He transmits his vision to the players in a way we understand, and that makes things a lot easier. His experience is very useful to us. He is calm when he needs to be but he can also be loud when he feels that we don't perform on the pitch the way he wants us to. It is a good combination.

How is the atmosphere in the dressing-room?
We are one big happy family. I have been lucky during my years as a player – I have always had good guys in my teams. From day one I have felt welcome here and that is very important. Not many of the guys speak English, and I can't express myself fully yet, but they still make sure I don't feel left out. I am older and more experienced now. I don't mind making mistakes as I am learning a new language. I say what I know and use my hands and a bit of English to make myself understood. I actually know quite a lot of Spanish words but it is so difficult to make them into sentences. I am also lucky to have Giovanni, who speaks some Spanish.

I really appreciate everybody's effort because it must be tough to be left out when you are new.

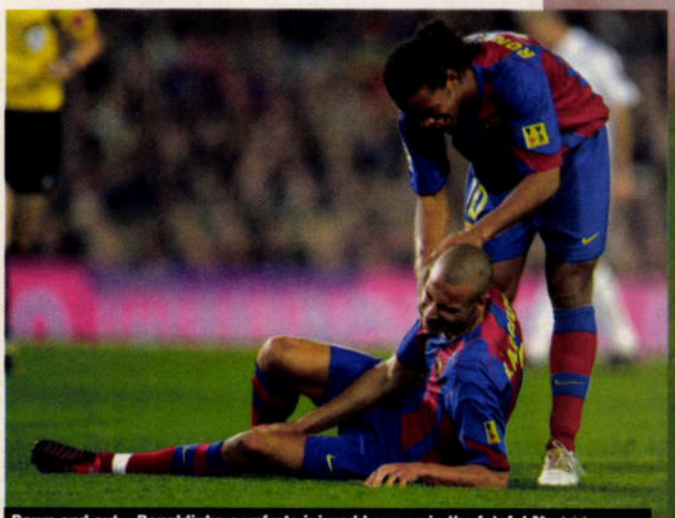
What is Ronaldinho like?
Ronaldinho is a guy who comes in every morning with a smile on his face. You just have to look at him to get happy. It is fantastic – to be under such pressure and still smile. He has fun when he plays football and that's great. That's why he can play as well as he does.

Have you ever regretted returning to play for Sweden?
Not at all. We got six very important points against Hungary and Iceland [in the World Cup qualifiers] and now we rest until March.

How is it that you didn't have a boot sponsorship contract for a while?
I haven't had one of those for three years. I just couldn't be bothered with everything that comes with it. For me it is too much even if it is only three or four times a year. You have to be in a certain place and it is usually when you have time off football. Money isn't everything. I have been lucky to have made some of it in Scotland so I didn't feel the need. But when you get to a big club like Barcelona you can negotiate different things into the contract.

For example?
Well, I can make sure I minimise the stuff I don't like to once a year. During these three years I have still got all the boots I wanted though.

What goals do you have left?
I have played in the World Cup and the European Championship – those were earlier ambitions. I still have a lot of goals and ambitions but I keep them to myself. The day I accomplish them I will talk.



Down and out...Ronaldinho comforts injured Larsson in the fateful Madrid game

1954 UEFA 50 years 2004

Man of the World

In the last of the series of interviews with outstanding European football personalities to mark UEFA's golden jubilee, Dutch star Ruud Gullit talks about the increasingly cosmopolitan nature of club football

As Feyenoord coach, you deal with players from totally different backgrounds and cultures, and who speak diverse languages. How do you cope with that?
I don't find it much of a problem. At most, it requires an extra individual approach. But even if I had an exclusively Dutch squad, this kind of individual approach would still be necessary. Every person is unique and has his own character, his own cultural background, beliefs, eating habits, humour, and so on. Only the language barrier is sometimes a problem with certain players, especially those from Asia, for example. You can make them take Dutch lessons, but in practice that seldom happens.

How does the situation compare with 15 years ago?
Things were different in my day. When I went to play for AC Milan, I went straight to have Italian lessons on my own – even though it might not have been really necessary because football is a language in itself. The better the player, the easier he just 'understands' his foreign team-mates automatically. That's all changed, of course, since the Bosman case. If that had been handled more carefully at the time, and if people had considered the consequences better, then things would have been totally different. At that time, only the really major players were ever transferred to foreign countries. Since then, anyone can go anywhere, with a real over-abundance of average players as a result.

What do you think of the idea of bringing the maximum number of foreigners in a team back down to three?
That's a great idea, but it won't help much. You can't roll back the Bosman case – and even if you could, you would have to totally rewrite European legislation. You can only introduce a limit of three foreign players from outside the European Union, not within it, since that's against the law. Now that the EU has gone through another round of expansion with a large number of new countries, such an initiative for European clubs hardly makes any sense at this point.

It doesn't get better than this...Gullit hoists the European Cup after Milan's 1989 triumph over Steaua Bucharest

Has football changed a great deal since you stopped playing?
The influence of business has increased enormously. It's become much more commercial. We deal with much larger sums of money and much more is at stake. For many clubs, being able to play in the Champions League has become vitally important. Just look at Borussia Dortmund, for example. The fact that this club is now having problems seems to me to be simply because of the one year that they did not qualify for that tournament. They had been banking on the income from playing in the Champions League, and when that disappears, the fall can be hard and fast. Clubs that don't play in the Champions League have to jump through more and more hoops.

How has this affected Dutch football?
The role of Dutch club football is getting smaller and smaller as a result, unfortunately. We can't compete in financial terms with clubs from the English Premiership, for example. Luckily, because the Dutch style of football is consistently based on attacking football, Holland still produces some exceptionally talented players, so I assume that the national team will always continue to be a major force in Europe and the world.

The number of matches has also increased enormously. Should the international match schedule be adjusted?
No, but I'm an advocate of co-ordinating the FIFA and UEFA calendars. Then at least we wouldn't lose our non-European players for tournaments outside the continent. One thing I would like to be able to do, though, is to be allowed to put more reserve players on the bench. That's a great solution to the overbooked schedule. There are so many matches that have to be played these days that clubs no longer have squads of only 18 players – so I think FIFA and UEFA should permit more subs on the bench in club competitions. Strangely enough, it's

Food for thought...Gullit has seen both sides of the coin as a player and now coach at Feyenoord

already permitted in international matches, and in practice you must be able to have your complete squad available.

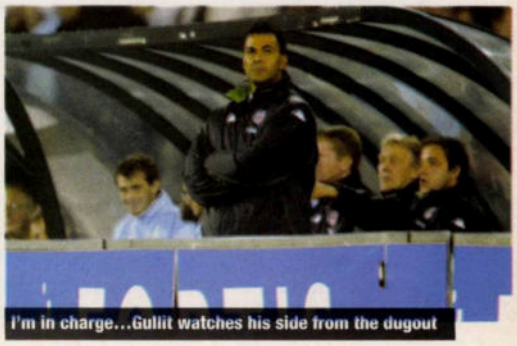
And the number of substitutions?
I think they should allow more subs during a match. For a coach that would mean he would no longer have to disappoint players by having them sit on the bench the whole time. All the selected players could be involved and stay involved in the match. But having said that, I believe you should still only be allowed to make one substitution in the last 15 minutes.

'Putting more reserves on the bench would be a great solution to the overbooked schedule'

What else do you think ought to be changed in football?
Actually, the only thing is that I hope we'll never play on artificial grass! Football on artificial grass is a completely different ball game to that played on real grass. For example, the ball goes much faster and you have breakaways much more often. If the ball moves just a metre too far, your team-mate can't get to it any more. As a player on artificial grass, it's impossible to turn really quickly, because you can't get enough traction. Notice how they have to make many more short passes on artificial grass in order to turn quickly. On real grass, you can put much more power behind it. So playing on artificial grass is also harder on your joints. It feels like you've been playing indoor football. You can hardly make any long passes. The ball shoots much too far. No, I see nothing good about it and I hope it will never become compulsory. I know it's seen as a solution in countries with extremely hot or cold weather, and there are all kinds of revolutionary technologies that ensure artificial grass seems as similar as possible to real grass. But playing on artificial grass is actually just a kind of glorified futsal. Football would never be the same.

How about putting together a fantasy team from all the players that you've played alongside in Holland, Italy and England?
I would put Hans Van Breukelen in goal, Mauro Tassotti, Franco Baresi, Marcel Desailly and Paolo Maldini in defence, Rene Van der Gijp, Frank Rijkaard, Carlo Ancelotti and Roberto Donadoni in midfield, with Johan Cruyff and Marco Van Basten in attack. On the bench: Willem Van Hanegem, Jan Heintze, Ronald Koeman, Roberto Mancini, Sinisa Mihajlovic, Ivan Nielsen, Ronald Spelbos and Sebastiano Rossi. It's always difficult to choose your favourite team because even though you can put together a great reserve bench, you still always overlook some players you also count among your favourites. Maybe not everyone in Europe knows Rene Van der Gijp, but he was my colleague at PSV, a right-half who sent me incredible crosses for two seasons. But everyone knows the rest of these names.

Ruud Gullit was speaking exclusively with Koert Westerman of Voetbal International, *a member of the ESM (European Sports Magazines) group*


I'm in charge...Gullit watches his side from the dugout

Building for 2010

South Africa coach Stuart Baxter talks to Mark Gleeson

Do it this way...Baxter passes on advice during a South Africa training session

What are your impressions after eight months as South Africa coach?
It has been a constant quest and, while at times it might seem a little futile, I am certainly buoyed by what I am doing. When I came into the job, it was in the knowledge that I needed to create some structures and to create a certain style of football, and that mission has not changed. I am getting some consistency into the squad and the attitude of the players is beginning to change too. We have had to turn the page and make things better because there is a history of acrimony between the players and the Football Association. But instead of trying to apportion blame, we have forgotten about that and are looking forward, and I do believe things have changed for the better. We have seen some progression particularly with our results, and if we can keep the team together and are not dogged by injuries and pull-outs and other nonsense, then I believe we can make real progress.

Have the expectations you had of the job been realised?
Very much so, but I was very much prepared for the complexities of the job. They used the word 'passion' to describe the reaction to Bafana Bafana results from the people and journalists, but I don't think it's passion, it is rather a set of extremes. It is way over the top this way or way over the top that way. You are either really rubbish or absolutely fantastic. As a coach you have to learn not to take much notice of that.

Despite the defeats by Ghana and the Democratic Republic of Congo, are you confident South Africa can still qualify for the 2006 finals in Germany?
I would love to go back to Ghana with the team we have now. We went there last June and were beaten 3-0. I was still getting to know the players and we didn't have Shaun Bartlett, who was

STUART BAXTER – LIFE AND TIMES

STUART BAXTER HAS a rich footballing pedigree, his father Bill having played for Aston Villa and Wolves after the war until 1956. Baxter, born in Birmingham 51 years ago, grew up at Villa Park when his dad was on the coaching staff and later turned professional with Preston North End. He also had spells at Dundee in Scotland, Stockport County and then moved to Sweden, where he saw out his playing days at Helsingborgs, Landskrona and Orebro. It was at the latter that Baxter began his coaching career, which has been a rollercoaster ride of international experience. He was at Start in Norway before working as Malcolm Allison's assistant at Vitoria Setubal in Portugal. Then came jobs in his own right at Halmstads and Djurgardens, where he became a friend of Sven Goran Eriksson, and in Japan, where he won the first J.League title at the helm of Vissel Kobe. Returning to Sweden, he took AIK Stockholm to the title in 1998 and a place in the Champions League the next year. Baxter then spent a year at Lyn Oslo before returning to England as a member of the FA coaching staff in 2002, primarily as coach of the Under-19 side. He was appointed to the South Africa job in April last year.

injured. Anyway, the bigger picture is still looking good. We are making progress not only with the team but also in terms of the long-term development of the younger players.

Why are you using so many youngsters in the national side?
Because we don't have an Under-23, Under-20 or Under-17 team involved in current competition, so we are having to use the national team to blood the youngsters. Some people say we shouldn't use the national team for experimentation but if young players like Elrio Van Heerden don't play in the national team, then they don't play, full stop. We have to use Bafana Bafana as a breeding ground. Remember, too, these young players don't have the hang-ups about playing at this level that some of the other players do. To get to the profile of a decent World Cup team, we have to give the players international exposure.

Are you not taking a big risk, for both the team and your own job security, giving so many a run a little ahead of their time?
I am a professional. I have to take into consideration that this country has won the right to host the World Cup finals in 2010. I cannot guarantee I will be here in 2010 but it is my duty to start putting down the foundations because if I don't nobody else will. If South Africa only starts concentrating on 2010 after the 2006 World Cup has passed it will be too late and a disaster. The country's football will go back 20 years and I don't want that on my conscience. There is no guarantee I'll qualify the team for 2006 so part of my job is to try to put together a decent World Cup side for 2010. Qualifying for 2006 is obviously a high priority but if we have to choose between that and having a shambles in 2010 or missing out on 2006 and having a great 2010 World Cup it is not difficult to figure out what the right answer would be. I believe we should put down a developmental programme as soon as possible, start the work right now. I believe 2006 should be attainable through that development but if we miss out it is not a disaster. There is no other way.

How have you enjoyed the 'African experience'?
It's very different. I have always tried to understand the culture of the places I go to and to be respectful. But the reason why a foreign coach has been brought in is that perhaps the Football Association does not expect me to accept everything, they are looking for some change and for some outside input. So I try to be as respectful as I can to the cultural differences but at the same time make sure that my opinions on how the job should be done are understood by all. That's a challenge in itself – you don't want to go standing on people's toes all the time and creating conflicts. At the same time you can't pussyfoot around, accepting everything that happens. That balance of sensitivity is maybe the key to being a successful coach abroad.

Fall guys...the USA, in action against Jamaica, may have to field a weak team in the final qualifiers

Money before country

A player dispute threatens the US campaign

LAST OCTOBER FIFA announced the appearance money for the 2006 World Cup – the sum paid to each of the 32 qualifying teams – will be £5million, an increase of 38 per cent from 2002.

Shortly after that the United States Soccer Federation presented a new offer to its national team players, covering World Cup finals and qualifying games. It offered an all-round increase of 38 per cent over the previous contract, which had expired in 2003.

In 2002, the US players received about £115,000 for their efforts, which took them to the quarter-finals. A 38 per cent increase on that was judged inadequate by the Players Association, which countered with a demand that – according to the USSF – amounted to a hike of 122 per cent.

Of course, the figures are in dispute. Mark Levinstein, the PA's lawyer, said the USSF's maths were skewed – especially since the figures ignored the £6m-plus sponsorship money generated by the national team.

The USSF responded by hardening its offer – leaving the money as it was, but withdrawing the commitment to back-date it to 2003. The PA promptly filed a claim of unfair practice with the National Labor Relations Board.

The USSF has also set a deadline – February 1 – to resolve the impasse. If there is no solution, it will "pursue other options" for the first of the final round of qualifiers in Trinidad on February 9.

That means using players who are not PA members. "The federation is running around trying to bully the PA players by threatening to use 15- and 16-year-olds," said Levinstein.

An exaggeration, of course, but it would not be easy for the USSF to find replacement players, who would inevitably be tarred as scabs.

In early December, the PA made a new proposal but the USSF said the demand, while down to a 108 per cent increase, was still too high. Levinstein replied by asserting the USSF's 38 per cent offer was really only 19 as the back-date had been withdrawn.

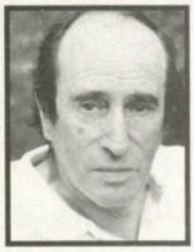
The situation worsened when the national team players refused to attend a December training camp. The USSF said it meant the players were on strike. The PA scoffed at that, saying it was never officially notified of the camp and that the stand-off was, in fact, a management lock-out.

'The federation is trying to bully the players'
Players Association lawyer Mark Levinstein

The USSF then handed the PA an ultimatum: a four-year contract must be agreed by binding arbitration.

Fielding a weak team and quite probably losing the first game in Trinidad would not be totally disastrous for the USA – after all, three of the six teams involved in the final qualifying group will go to Germany, while a fourth will play-off against an Asian country. But prolonging the dispute would seem like suicide for both sides. At stake is £5m World Cup appearance money.

Paul Gardner



FOOTBALL MEMORIES

One cap wonder

Brian Glanville on the career of George Robb

Mud in your eye...Robb (right) shoots for Spurs v Man City

'Robb won 18 amateur international caps and scored the last of Great Britain's three goals at the Helsinki Olympics in 1952, when they were embarrassingly eliminated by Luxembourg'

IT WAS GEORGE ROBB'S fate, or fortune, that his only England cap was won in November 1953 in the cataclysmic match at Wembley against Hungary. England lost 6-3 and with it their unbeaten home record against foreign teams.

With all deference to Robb, who had an impressive career as a leading amateur, then as a professional with Tottenham, his selection on England's left wing for such a potentially difficult match was a strange one.

In those days, the England teams were picked not by their manager, Walter Winterbottom, but by a committee of club directors. The logical choice would have been Tom Finney, the famous Preston North End winger, who since 1947 had often figured on the left wing, with the equally illustrious Stanley Matthews on the right.

But Finney was injured, Robb it was who took his place, and given the brilliance of Puskas' Hungarians and the inadequacy of Winterbottom's defensive tactics, there was little he or anybody else could do to stave off disaster. At least Robb played a part in England's third goal, having been brought down in the box to win a penalty, which Alf Ramsey converted.

I have two especially keen memories of Robb. The first, from as long ago as 1943, when, as a young schoolboy, I sat on the grass along the touchline of Finchley's Summers Lane ground, to see him have an excellent game as a 17-year-old inside-right against Acton Town in the Final of the Middlesex Charity Cup. That match was also memorable for the fact that the inside-left was none other than Eddie Baily, who would go on to play with such success for Tottenham and England.

Finchley, who won the game, were at that time seen as something of a nursery club for Spurs, though Baily went on to join them long before Robb did. Baily went into the Army, Robb into the Royal Navy, although he never put to sea, deployed as he was to Skegness, Malvern and Ayr. It was while in the Navy that he was turned from an inside-forward into an outside-left. As such, he would, on returning to Finchley, win 18 amateur international caps and represent Great Britain at the Helsinki Olympics in 1952. There, he scored the last of Britain's three goals, when they were embarrassingly eliminated 5-3 by Luxembourg.

Teacher training

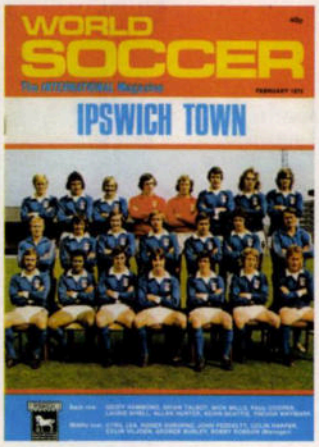
Robb, born in Finsbury Park – nearer Arsenal than Spurs! – on June 1, 1926, was the son of a lead burner and the youngest of six children. He won a scholarship to Holloway School, where he stayed until the age of 18 and his service call-up. Demobbed, he took an office job at first but then trained as a teacher, taking a physical education diploma at Loughborough College. Thence to Christ's College, Finchley, where he taught history, English and PE for many years. Then at Ardingly, combining his job as a teacher with that of a footballer.

Robb did not become a professional until June 1953, once with Spurs, though only after he'd played seven games for them. This meant that by the time he made his England debut he'd been a professional for less than six months.

My other memory of him points up the difference between today's professionals, with their Ferraris, and those of Robb's day. We met one Saturday at the trolley-bus stop outside Manor House tube station, when he was on his way to play for Spurs. As always, he was friendly, genial and modest, a player always greatly popular with supporters.

Standing only 5ft 7½in but solidly built at just under 12 stone, Robb was fast, direct and technically assured. Though he never played for England again at senior level, he won three 'B' caps in 1954.

He went on playing League football until the 1958-59 season, making 182 appearances in all, scoring 53 goals, plus five goals in 18 FA Cup games. For over 40 years, the Hungarians invited him to Budapest to celebrate their Wembley triumph.



FEBRUARY 1975

FROM THE ARCHIVES

THE problems of Internazionale were in the spotlight 30 years ago after the Italian club were knocked out of the UEFA Cup by FC Amsterdam.

According to Keir Radnedge, the club that had dominated European football in the 1960s, winning the European Cup and the World Club Cup twice, as well as the Italian League three times, were the victims of a wider malaise in Italian soccer.

Inter president Ivanoe Fraizzoli pointed out that the club's golden era had been achieved with foreign stars such as Luis Suarez, Jair da Costa, Horst Szymaniak and Joaquim Peiro. But it was 11 years since Italy had shut up shop to foreign imports.

Fraizzoli was adamant that the foreigners ban needed to be lifted for Italian clubs to be successful in Europe again. "I have officially requested that we open the frontiers again," said the president, who advocated a novel approach to paying for foreign players' wages. "The club could easily pay for the players by taking part in foreign tournaments and tours."

WIN a top-quality Mitre football

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Mitre has kindly donated a top-quality football for this month's Quiz. The first correct entry selected at random after February 25 will win the ball.

SEND YOUR ENTRY TO:
FEBRUARY QUIZ, *World Soccer*, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS

THIS MONTH'S POSER:
Name the famous stadium pictured

DECEMBER QUIZ
Winner: Safinaz Mohammed Abbas, Ibri, Oman
Answer: Olympic stadium, Berlin

OBITUARIES

Signature cig...Goethals

● RAYMOND GOETHALS, who has died aged 83, made history by becoming the first – and still the oldest – coach to win the Champions League. He was 72 when his Marseille team overcame Milan 1-0 in Munich in 1993 on what he declared to be the best night of his life. His reputation was tarnished somewhat by the match-fixing scandal that came to light a few days later, meaning that the French club's celebrations would not endure for long into the summer.

Although Goethals was not implicated, the dictatorial club owner Bernard Tapie was very much involved in the rigging and was jailed for his part in ensuring that Marseille also won the French League title that year.

Born in Brussels on October 7, 1921, Goethals enjoyed a modest career as a goalkeeper before embarking on his coaching career with Waremme in 1957. He made his name three years later by transforming St Truiden from relegation strugglers to title contenders. Extolling the virtues of both the offside trap and sound defensive tactics, Goethals progressed, becoming assistant coach to the national team, then head coach. On his watch, Belgium qualified for the World Cup finals for the first time in 16 years in 1970.

Forever clad in a tatty trenchcoat, the image of Goethals was not complete without a cigarette in his mouth. Now known as the Magician, he took over at Anderlecht, taking the capital's top club to the European Cup-winners Cup Final two years running, winning the second.

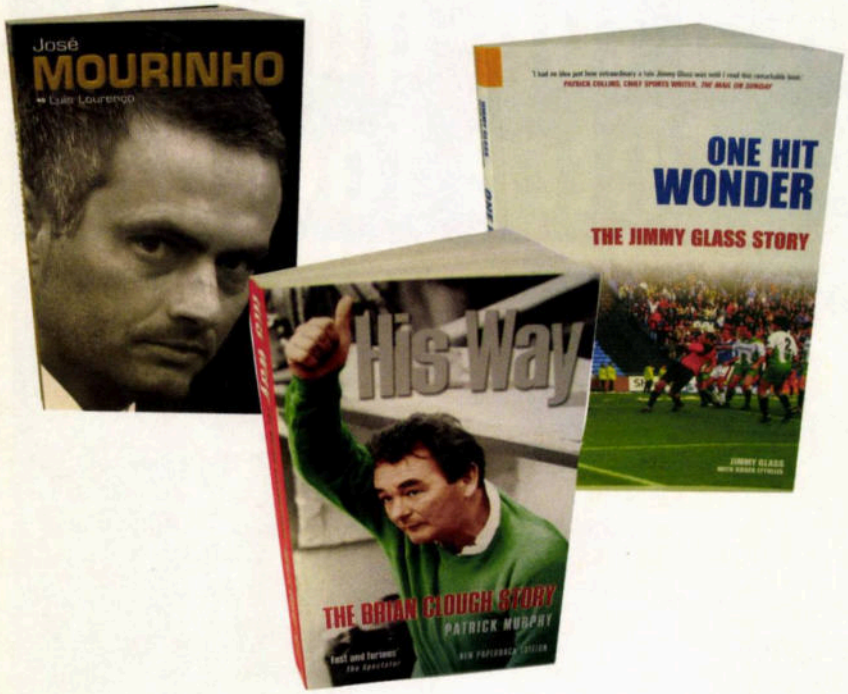
After spells with Bordeaux and Sao Paulo, Goethals came home to coach Standard Liege to successive League titles.

While suspended by the Belgian FA for match-fixing, Goethals went to Portugal's Guimaraes, returning for second spells with Anderlecht and Bordeaux, and, finally, Marseille.

● TOM FITZGERALD, the coach of Columbus Crew from 1996 to 2001, during which time they won three straight titles, has died after a motorcycle accident, aged 53.

Fitzgerald had recently returned to the University of Tampa after leading UCLA to the NCAA national title.

● Moroccan striker HICHAM ZEROUALI, who played for Aberdeen between January 2000 and May 2002, died in a car accident in Rabat, aged 27. Zerouali scored three goals in 17 appearances for the national team and played at the 2002 African Nations Cup finals in Mali.



Mourinho, Clough and...Jimmy Glass

Three very different biographies, plus arguably the world's most useful football reference book

EVERY ASPIRING young professional should read **One Hit Wonder: The Jimmy Glass Story** *(Tempus, £12.99)* to remind them of the thousands of players who fail to make the grade every year.

Glass, a goalkeeper, got his 15 minutes of fame when scoring an injury-time goal on the last day of the 1998-99 season to keep Carlisle in the Football League. But for the strange twists of fate that took him on loan to Carlisle for the last three games of that campaign, Glass's career would have been remembered by just a handful of Crystal Palace and Bournemouth fans.

Unlike most player biographies, Glass pulls no punches in his criticism of the professional game. His account of his career in the lower divisions, as well as his descent into a gambling addiction, is written with humour and honesty. It deserves to be widely-read.

His Way *(Robson, £7.99)* is a timely new paperback edition of Patrick Murphy's excellent account of the life of Brian Clough. Like many of the best biographies, the author knew his subject over many years, and their friendship ensures plenty of perceptive anecdotes.

Jose Mourinho has been compared to Brian Clough, and the Portuguese coach certainly shares Clough's unconventional approach to management. But Mourinho was never a talented player. Indeed, journalist Luis Lourenco makes no mention of his short-lived career in **Jose Mourinho: Made In Portugal** *(Dewi Lewis Media, £12.99).*

Instead, he focuses on Mourinho's equally short but meteoric coaching career, which started as recently as 2000 when an assistant at Barcelona and on through to his Champions League success with Porto last year.

An intriguing portrait of one of European football's most charismatic figures.

In the absence of the *European Football Yearbook* (publisher Sports Projects backed out of this year's edition at the 11th hour), the **Annuario del Calcio Mondiale** *(Cantelli Editore, 24 euros)* is likely to prove even more useful than usual. Well worth the investment.

The latest shinpads
(clockwise from right)

Uhlsport Air Safe, (£19.99);
Sondico Matrix (£19.99);
Sells Anatomica (£14.99);
Uhlsport AFS Equipe (£7.99);
Puma Cellerator (£20)

REVEALED: our third winner

James Kearns is the third monthly winner in our exclusive Champions League competition. His entry, published here, will now go on to the final shortlist, from which we will select the overall winner, who will win a trip to the Champions League Final in Istanbul in May.

WINNER NO 3
James Kearns

Nielsen, Merk, Meier and Frisk. Not quite galacticos, but Europe's premier referees and the continent's footballing glitterati share a common goal: to reach the Final of the Champions League.

Referees are the sport's most peculiar breed. More often baited than they are feted, they carry out a notoriously thankless task, their only real reward being the big occasion. If players trade in trophies, refs flaunt their finals.

Kim Milton Nielsen was picked for last year's Final and will be hoping to clinch his own personal 'double'. Urs Meier, out of hiding since his run-in with the English press, will want to add to his Final of 2002.

If Markus Merk is selected, it would complete a remarkable two years for the German dentist. In charge of the all-Italian Final in 2003, he also oversaw Greece's shock win against Portugal in Lisbon.

Looking to officiate in his first Champions League Final is the flamboyant Anders Frisk. The suave Swede, with the Euro 2000 Final already to his name, bled for the cause in Rome earlier this season and would savour the glamour and the bright lights.

To direct an all-star cast on the biggest club stage in the world would be a fitting role for the Hollywood ref. But whoever is handed the whistle, the choice of official remains an intriguing sub-plot to this sporting blockbuster.

- We're offering readers the chance to write for the magazine in an exciting new Champions League competition. One lucky – and talented – reader will also win a trip to the Champions League Final in Istanbul in May.

- All you have to do is write a short article on the Champions League. It could be a match report, a player profile or an interview with a club tealady. The more original, the better.

- Every month, we will publish the best entry in the magazine. Each monthly winner will then join a shortlist from which the overall winner will be selected.

- The winner of the grand prize will travel to the Champions League Final in Istanbul next May as a guest of *World Soccer*, watch the game as part of the *World Soccer* reporting team, and then write a report that will be published in *World Soccer*.

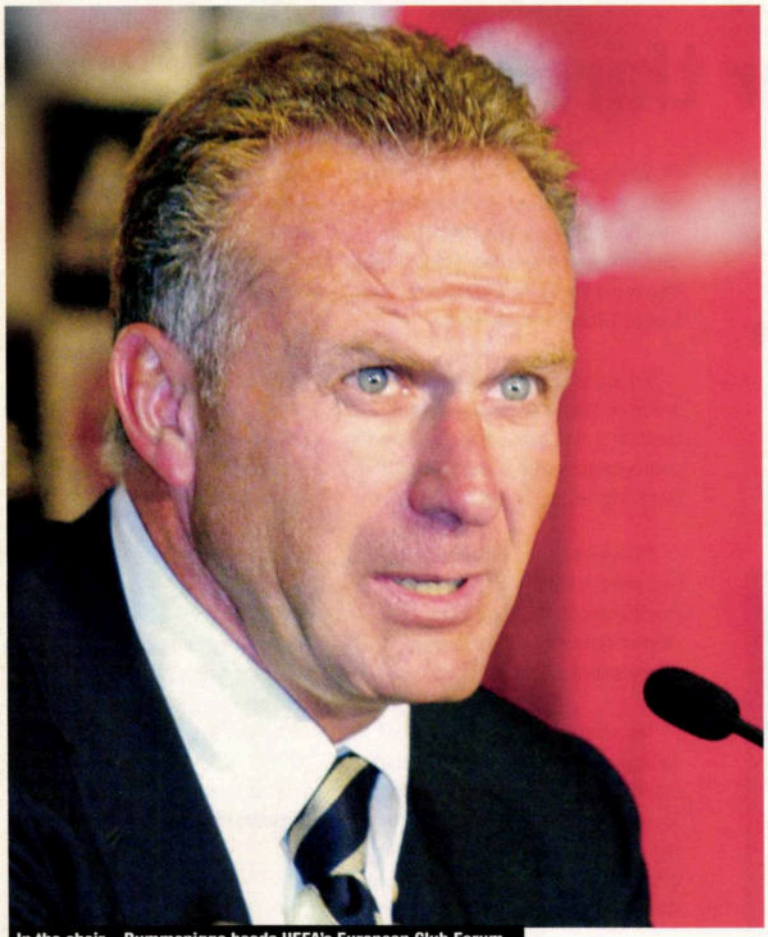
- So get writing! Entries must be no longer than 250 words, and must be on a subject linked to the Champions League.

- The competition will close after the Champions League quarter-finals. Shortlisted entries will be published in *World Soccer* between now and April. The winner of the grand prize will be selected from the shortlist by a panel of *World Soccer* staff.

- Send your entries to:

World Soccer
Champions League competition
24th Floor, King's Reach Tower,
Stamford Street,
London SE1 9LS

or via our website:
www.worldsoccer.com



In the chair...Rummenigge heads UEFA's European Club Forum

Bayern time

Bayern Munich's vice-president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, a key powerbroker in the European game, talks to Nick Bidwell

What's your verdict on the first half of the season?
We have to be very satisfied with our position. We've laid the foundations for a successful season. We made a number of important changes in the summer. We brought in four new players, including Lucio and Torsten Frings, and also replaced Ottmar Hitzfeld as coach with Felix Magath.

What has Magath brought to the job of coach?
His philosophy is based on fitness, organisation and discipline. We had some problems in these areas last season and it was imperative that we corrected them. Slowly but surely the players have come to see the good sense in his emphasis on optimum physical conditioning. It's no accident that we often score late in games.

At Stuttgart, Magath was very successful with a young squad. Did you ever think he might not be best suited to Bayern?
Not in the slightest. We did not plump for Magath on a whim. We looked at his excellent work with Stuttgart over the last three years and came to the conclusion that he could give us what we were lacking.

How difficult was it to cut your ties with Hitzfeld?
It was very hard. He was with us for six years, and for the first five seasons he did a wonderful job, winning everything. But last season things didn't go well and it came to the point where we felt a change of coach was necessary. We are still friends with Ottmar. We have dinner together.

How optimistic are you of winning the Bundesliga title this season?
We are on the right road. This is a club which needs good results and titles. If Schalke, for example, do not win the Bundesliga this season, it will be seen as normal. It's 48 years since they won the League and if that sequence extends to 49, it makes no difference. It is a different story for Bayern. If we don't win something we will come in for criticism. Our players have to be prepared for this.

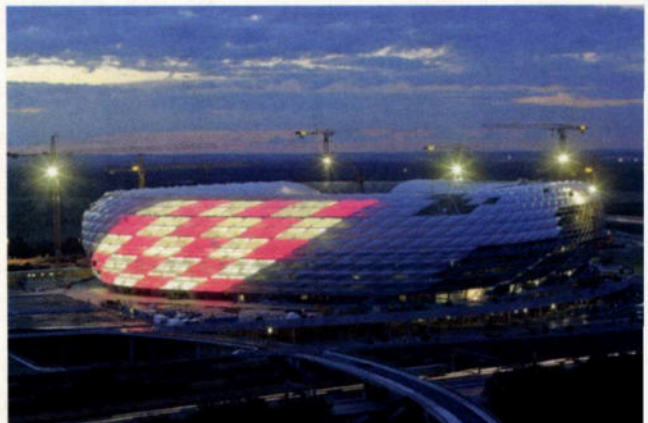
Future perfect?... Jurgen Klinsmann has said he will win the 2006 World Cup for Germany

What's more important, the Bundesliga or Champions League?
I believe the national championship is the most important. Of course, the Champions League has more prestige. But in the Champions League you need luck to go your way. Over 34 Bundesliga games, good and bad luck even themselves out.

How do you feel about the 'FC Hollywood' tag?
Probably no one here likes it but in some ways it does help to fill up our stadium, and we have a new one on the way. People are curious about what the papers write. It is not really a positive description but ultimately it makes the club more interesting. Bayern Munich divides the German population – 50 per cent for, 50 per cent against. It's something we have to accept.

What's your minimum objective in the Champions League?
To go further than last year. I would be happy with a place in the quarter-finals.

Germany coach Jurgen Klinsmann insists on a policy of alternating Bayern's Oliver Kahn and Arsenal's Jens Lehmann in goal. Is this good?
My feeling is that it is not a good situation for either Oliver Kahn or Jens Lehmann. Whenever one of them makes a mistake, it is portrayed in the press as a major disaster. This sort of competition means they are always under great pressure. It's not beneficial. A player has to feel that his coach trusts him. We've had a meeting with Klinsmann about this but nothing has changed.



New build...the Allianz Arena will be shared by Bayern and 1860 Munich

Present and correct…Lucio has been a good buy

How do you judge Klinsmann's first few games in charge?
Very positively indeed. He's had a fantastic start. Not only are his team winning games, but they are also playing good football. On becoming *Bundestrainer*, Klinsmann said he would win the 2006 World Cup for Germany, and that was an important message to send out. There was a lot of laughter when he initially said that, but it is dying down now.

You are the chairman of the UEFA European Club Forum. How do you see your role?
We exist as a link between UEFA and the clubs. The European Club Forum is a mix of everybody – big clubs such as Real Madrid and Milan and also smaller ones from Belarus, Cyprus and other countries. Of course, the interests of clubs around the continent differ greatly. Real Madrid have different concerns to a club from Belarus. So the secret is to find a compromise, to find a balance. A good example would be the recent changes to the UEFA Cup. This has helped the medium and smaller clubs.

Where do you stand on proposals to force European clubs to have at least five homegrown players in their squads?
For a club like Bayern there would be no dramatic change as we already invest good money in youth development. There would be no problem for us. It could happen. I was recently told by the DFL [German League] that they had had a meeting with UEFA and that just one country was against the idea.

Can you succeed in your call for clubs to be compensated for releasing players for internationals?
This is a vital aim. The actual situation is totally unfair. If you look at the money generated by a World Cup, it is a big cake, worth some two billion Swiss francs [£900million]. I realise money is needed to do things for the good of football as a whole. I recognise this completely. But FIFA also has to accept that the roots of football are found at the clubs. It is not acceptable that we give a player like Michael Ballack to the national team for six weeks and we continue to pay his wages. We get nothing in return.

How are talks going?
Last summer I had the feeling that things were moving in the right direction. Right now, there are no talks.

What's your opinion on Michel Platini's idea of scrapping the Champions League and UEFA Cup and instead having a single 256-team knockout cup?
It has no chance. The Champions League is the best club event in the world. It's run fantastically by UEFA and TEAM [UEFA's marketing arm]. We'll never go back to the old way of doing things. I met Michel Platini before the Final of Euro 2004 and asked him about this, and he replied that the problem with the present system was that a team from Malta or Cyprus never gets to the Champions League and so cannot meet a Bayern Munich. Football, like everything in life, has to look forward. Nobody is interested in seeing a Cypriot team in the Champions League but everybody wants to see Real Madrid and Manchester United in Europe. That has to be recognised by Michel Platini.

European clubs were initially against a multi-team World Club Cup, which is to be held in Japan in December. Now you agree. What has changed?
We were happy with a one-off match between the European and South American champions in Tokyo. You get good money for it, you play the game, then you go home. FIFA's initial suggestion was to bring in a 16-team tournament with five or six clubs from Europe, and we told them it was impossible. We didn't cancel the second group stage of the Champions League to create a new competition. FIFA took our opposition on board and came back with a plan for a six-team tournament, which was much more acceptable.

Would Bayern take part?
It's been agreed that there will be no obligation on the Champions League winners to play in the new tournament. But frankly, if we won the Champions League we would participate.

Is a breakaway independent European league still a possibility?
I hope not. It's happened in pro basketball and it's not working very well. My hope is that international bodies like FIFA and UEFA do not do things which can't be accepted by the clubs. That perhaps could create problems. I hope that never happens.

Ligue of their own

Canal Plus's deal with the French League is the biggest TV contract ever

THERE WAS WIDESPREAD surprise when it was announced that the French League had signed a three-year, £1.3billion deal with pay-TV operator Canal Plus. The package is worth significantly more than the £1.024bn three-year deal between BSkyB and the Premier League, the previous biggest TV rights agreement, and came at a time when it had been generally accepted that the football TV rights market was at best flat or even in decline.

Then the Dutch Eredivisie signed a three-year deal with Versatel for live pay-TV matches and a highlights deal with Talpa (with an extra live game sold to RTL) for a total £50m a season. This is £14m more a season than the current deal.

It would probably be wrong to assume on the basis of these deals that the football TV rights market has turned the corner. But what they do show is that the value of TV rights is determined by competition issues between broadcasters. The explosion in values that occurred in England in the 1990s, for example, was the result of Sky seeking to establish itself as the dominant force in the pay-TV market. The collapse of ITV Digital in 2001 removed the only real threat to Sky, so when the Premier League rights came up for renegotiation, the League had to offer 30 per cent more matches in order to maintain the same level of revenue.

Battle for subscribers

In France, Canal Plus is engaged in a struggle for subscribers with rival pay-TV company TPS, with whom Canal Plus previously shared the rights. By outbidding TPS and securing all French football content Canal Plus estimates it will add 300,000 subscribers to its existing 8.1 million. Similarly, the Dutch deal with Versatel gives entrepreneur Jan De Mol access to content for his planned subscription TV channel, which he hopes to roll out over the next two years.

The deals are good news for French and Dutch clubs. Increases in TV payments always end up in players' wage packets, so the likes of Lyon and Ajax may at last be able to retain their best homegrown talents. However, the experience of England, Germany and Italy should teach the Dutch and French that the current boom will last only for as long as pay-TV companies are fighting for market share.

Simon Banks

Top five pay-TV deals

	VALUE PER SEASON
FRANCE (Canal Plus)	£428m
ENGLAND (BSkyB)	£341m
ITALY (Sky Italia/Mediaset) Individual deals with clubs ranging from £64m for Juventus to £3.5m for Siena	£255m*
GERMANY (Premiere)	£128m
SPAIN (Gestsport/Sogecabl) Deals ranging from £56m for Real Madrid to £60m between 30 smaller First and Second Division clubs	n/a**

**Combined value of individual deals **No comparable total figure because of deals with Second Division clubs*

Mover and shaker...Abramovich has already forged links with other European clubs

The Corinthians mystery

Is Roman Abramovich establishing a satellite club for Chelsea in South America? Dan Brennan investigates

IN LATE NOVEMBER 2004, a little known London-based group called Media Sports Investments (MSI) sent shockwaves through South America when it announced a £20million investment in Brazilian club Corinthians. Making a 10-year financial commitment, MSI has promised to transform the Sao Paulo outfit into a super club to rival Real Madrid and Manchester United.

More intriguing still are the persistent, though vigorously-denied rumours that the man pulling the strings is Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich.

MSI is fronted by 33-year-old Iranian businessman Kia Joorabchian and is understood to represent a group of 'Anglo-Russian' investors. Their first act as Corinthians benefactors, was to rustle up a £10.5million 'gift' in the form of Boca Juniors' widely coveted forward Carlos Tevez.

The MSI negotiations took four months to complete and met with much resistance from sections of the Corinthians board. Of chief concern was the provenance of the cash injection and the identities of the 'Anglo-Russian investment consortium' represented by Joorabchian.

Initially, it was thought the main man was Boris Berezovsky, once Russia's most powerful oligarch, now in permanent London exile. But there is a growing belief, in the South American media at least, that his former protege and partner, Abramovich, is behind MSI and the Corinthians deal.

Joorabchian rejects suggestions that MSI is connected with either of the two oligarchs, both of whom have been equally strenuous in their denials.

An Abramovich source told me: "Since Abramovich and Berezovsky were business partners back in the mid-1990s, people extrapolated a link, since Abramovich sells newspapers. There is no business connection between MSI and Abramovich."

Others, though, find the denials hard to believe. "Before [the deal] went through there were rumours that Abramovich was coming to Brazil to buy a club," said a senior Brazilian sports lawyer. "Suddenly, Kia Joorabchian arrives. I am convinced he is the front man for someone more powerful."

Speculation linking Abramovich to MSI has been further fuelled by the fact that last November, shortly before the Corinthians deal and the Tevez transfer were announced, the Chelsea owner's yacht, *Le Grand Bleu*, was sighted in Buenos Aires' Puerto Madreno marina. Checks with the port authorities confirmed that it had been booked in for 20 nights at £833 per night. While not denying the possibility that the yacht was there for refuelling, the Abramovich source insisted the Chelsea boss was in Moscow at the time.

However, a source close to Boca Juniors indicated that, in the same week, Abramovich had dined with Boca president Mauricio Macri at an exclusive Italian restaurant, La Parolaccia, in Buenos Aires, along with various other football folk including Guillermo Coppola, the former agent of Diego Maradona.

'There is a growing belief in the South American media that Abramovich is behind the deal'

Strategic alliances

The notion of Abramovich seeking to establish a satellite for Chelsea in South America is not so far-fetched. Already, since his arrival at Stamford Bridge, the club have forged strategic alliances with Porto and PSV Eindhoven. And while there may not be a formal arrangement with CSKA Moscow – UEFA recently cleared Abramovich of any conflict of interest over alleged dual ownership – his friendship with CSKA president Yevgeny Giner and role as majority shareholder of CSKA's main sponsor, Sibneft, indicates a close relationship between the two clubs.

Most recently, Czech Republic midfielder Jiri Jarosik joined Chelsea from CSKA and talked of CSKA players joking about being Chelsea's reserve team.

Extending the network to Corinthians, and creating a bridgehead into South America, the world's primary supplier of A grade football talent to Europe, would seem a logical step for Abramovich.

In a separate twist, Corinthians have concluded a co-operation agreement with Georgian club Dinamo Tbilisi. This will include an exchange programme for players and coaching staff, while the Brazilians will help establish a football academy in the Georgian capital. Corinthians president Alberto Dualib says this has nothing to do with the MSI deal, and that the contact was brokered by no less than Georgian president Mikhail Saakashvili.

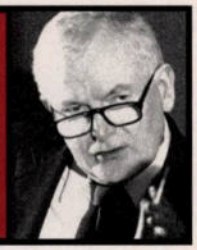
Curiously, Dinamo's owner, Badri Patarkatsishvili – Georgia's leading oligarch – is a close friend of Abramovich. Perhaps that is just another coincidence, but they do seem to be stacking up.

When you are as powerful as the Chelsea boss you don't need to be seen to be effective. And while segregating myth from reality remains a tall task, it is hard not to feel, increasingly, that all roads lead to Roman.

Just visiting?...Abramovich's yacht was sighted in a Buenos Aires marina

WS WORLD SOCCER GLOBAL VIEW Paul Gardner

The silly season



Proposals from the Welsh FA and FIFA deserve to be thrown out

A PAIR OF spectacularly silly ideas have recently found their way into football's official documents. Neither has been acted upon, and if common sense prevails both will be quickly buried. But you never know.

We can thank the Welsh for the first one. I cannot imagine that the Welsh FA normally has a particularly onerous schedule, but for the past year they seem to have been frenetically busy thinking up amendments to the rules.

On the agenda for next month's meeting of the International Board, the body responsible for changes to the game's laws, are 18 proposals to be voted upon or considered. Eleven of them come from Wales, and among them is this knee-slapper – that offside be limited to the two penalty areas.

Great. So here we go, line up with a couple of big, strong forwards, position them right on the edge of the opposing penalty area, whack the ball up to them, and forget about all that time-wasting midfield play and approach work. Route One all the way.

That may well be the way the game is already played in Wales, but their attempts to export such banality should be vigorously resisted. If the other seven members of the International Board have a sense of humour, they will laugh this one out of existence.

The second idea is silly enough – but also deeply pernicious. This is something that came up at FIFA's executive committee meeting last December – a proposal to change the Under-17 World Championship into an Under-18 event.

For a start, the proposers of this hogwash (I gather it was born in FIFA's strategic planning committee) seem to wish that their idea be shielded from any publicity. The FIFA press release on the executive meeting contained a bulky paragraph dealing with six decisions concerning women's football. Buried in the middle was a reference to "examining the possibility of making the men's Under-17 World Championship an Under-18 event". The wording, once discovered, is revealing. The Under-17 tournament is not a men's event. It is for boys – and that is precisely what gives it a unique character, what makes it so different from all the other FIFA-run tournaments.

The proposal would not be simply a matter of changing the age group. It would utterly destroy everything that the Under-17 event – which has been played 10 times since 1985 – represents.

Remember that age categories are always misleading. Players in the Under-17 event can be as old as 17 years 6 months – those in an Under-18 version could be 18 and a half.

'Changing the Under-17 event would utterly destroy everything it represents'

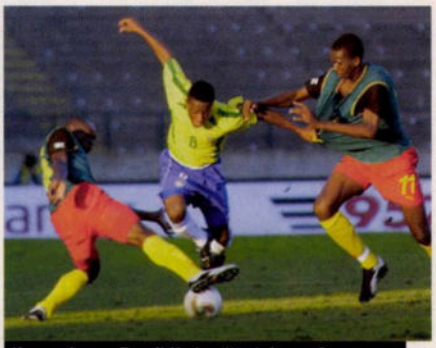
Hidden somewhere in that spread of a year or so is a vital moment in the life of young footballers, the moment when the boyishness goes from their play. Their interest becomes sharply focused on becoming a professional, and the whole atmosphere of the game changes.

Money and agents enter the frame big time, as do coaches and tactics. Once that transformation has been made, we are looking at younger versions of the highly-paid players who entertain us every weekend, giving us a clone of the pro game.

The boys' game is different. I speak from experience, having personally attended 90 of these Under-17 games (and over twice that number if I include those watched on television). This is what I have seen – a game in which the players feel free to display their individuality on the field, a game that is relatively free of the restricting influence of tactical systems.

I cannot recall ever having seen a team play defensively or negatively. The result is an attack-oriented version of the sport – the goals-per-game average is always close to, and usually above, three. Most recently, in Finland in 2003, it was 3.7. Nor do I remember any moment of deliberately violent play – certainly I have never seen anything close to the multi-player brawls the pros inflict upon us from time to time.

What the Under-17s offer comes close to what is always posited as the football ideal – a goalscoring game of skill and open attacking play, where arguing with referees is reduced to a minimum, where sportsmanship and not gamesmanship rules. I wonder if any of that is appreciated by the people who would increase the age level. I am told their aim is to make things logical and administratively tidy, making the two-year cycle of youth tournaments mirrored by a two-year span between the Under-20 World Youth Cup and a new Under-18 event.



Happy days...Brazil Under-17s take on Cameroon

Football without a scowl

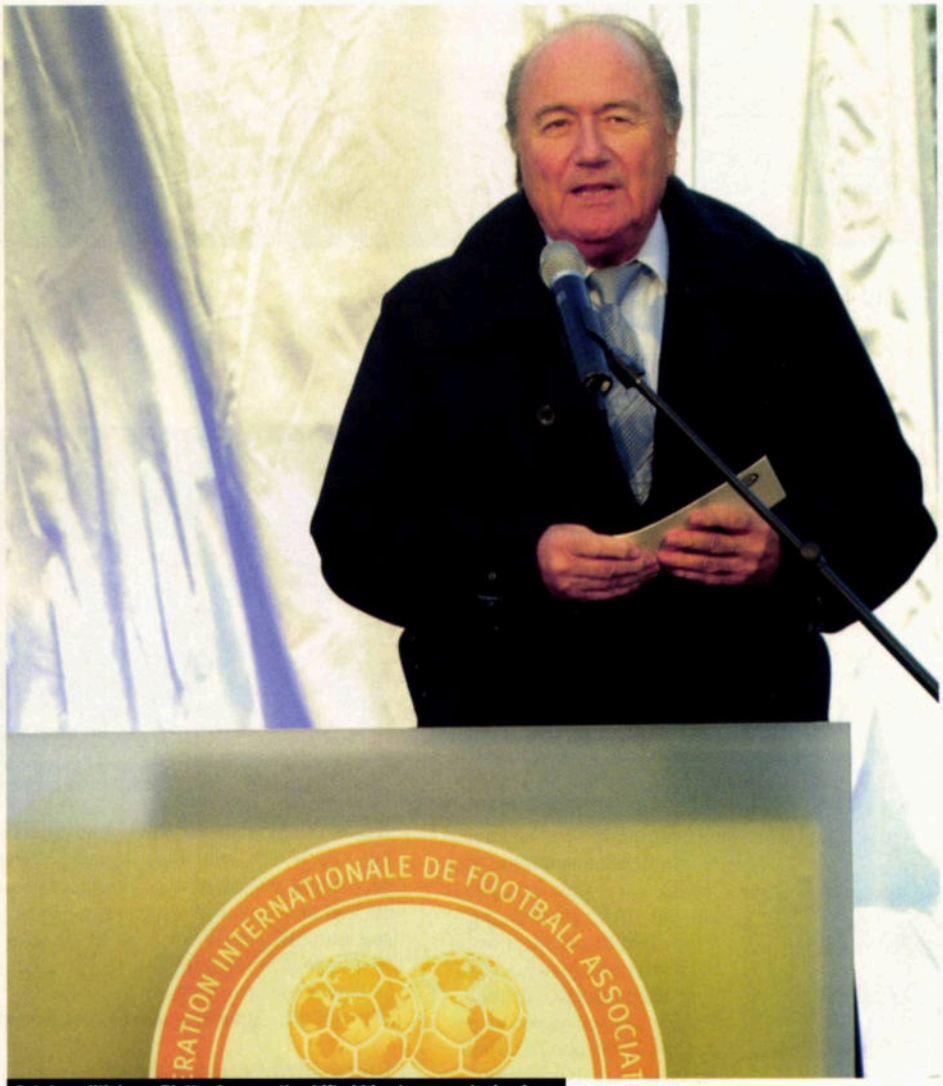
But already at the Under-17 level we have a game that is precariously balanced – it is football at the final moments of its youthfulness, not carefree, of course, but not yet afflicted with the blights of caution and tactical cuteness. It is not a bad thing to be reminded, once every two years, that football can be played without a scowl on the face, that it can look like an enjoyable activity.

But all that would disappear by moving the age bracket up a year. There is really nothing to be said for an Under-18 tournament since it would not add anything that is not already present in the Under-20 event (and would increase the problems of obtaining releases for players from their clubs). A much more sensible idea, mooted by Argentinian youth coach Hugo Tocalli, is to lower the age brackets, creating Under-16 and Under-19 tournaments.

The Under-17 tournament has always lived uneasily. It is, apparently, not an attractive event for a sponsor and certainly no money-maker for the organising country.

But its value cannot be measured in marketing terms. It is a football event and it speaks volumes to those who love the game.

To destroy it merely for the sake of administrative convenience would be an awful, shameful move.



Astute politician...Blatter has gently shifted his stance on technology

Open door policy

Once video technology is in, there will be no stopping it

INCIDENTS REKINDLING THE debate about technological assistance for referees are like buses, the long-empty road punctuated by occasional and infrequent convoys.

The intrigue now is the timing of the latest bunch. A flurry of incidents in England and Spain created a furore that shattered the comparative calm of mid-winter and erupted less than two months before the International Board's annual meeting.

This year it is being staged in south Wales at the end of February with time and venue falling conveniently so FIFA president Sepp Blatter can watch the English League Cup Final in Cardiff's Millennium stadium.

The issue of technology is not up for decision but merely discussion. Personally, I would like to see the International Board sanction an experiment in a major league but I doubt it can move that fast. The best we can hope is that proposals are sought that could lead to an experiment being undertaken in, say, 18 months' time. It's not simple. The first issue is whether to consider electronic assistance at all, the second relates to which areas of the game it should be applied, and the third to whether appropriate technology exists.

Blatter, like the clever politician he is, has gently shifted his position. Originally, he was against all technological assistance. "It is essential," he once said, "that the game is the same at the World Cup finals as it is on your local park. This is the strength of the game, it is why a boy can dream about being a World Cup winner because he plays exactly the same game to the same laws. We don't want two games: one for highly-paid professionals, who are a small minority, anyway, and another for the amateurs, who are the enormous majority."

Fair enough. That was then. This is now.

'Blatter will accept non-intrusive technology if it is proved beyond doubt it works to perfection'

And Blatter is prepared to consider non-intrusive goal-line technology as long as – an important condition – it can be proved beyond all doubt it works to perfection.

Blatter has pointed to the tennis use of 'Cyclops' to check whether a high-powered serve lands in or out of court. But though tennis has been employing such technology longer than any other sport the bad news is that even now it is not always effective.

Intrusive assistance – where a 'fifth referee' may change a decision if video proves the 'real' referee mistaken – remains a no-no for Blatter. He considers this impossible interference with the sacred subjective right of the referee to run the game as he sees it.

Handball controversy

The first in the latest batch of match incidents came during Liverpool's 1-0 home defeat by Chelsea, when the hosts claimed a penalty for handball by midfielder Tiago. Referee Mike Riley indicated 'ball to hand' and waved play on. Even the analysts could not agree. Tiago's hand should not have been at head level but a player uses his arms to gain leverage when he jumps not with foul intent (handball, unlike foul play now, must be intentional). Riley could also have claimed that a Liverpool player, seeking to attack the ball, had inadvertently headed Tiago's hand against the ball.

In such confused circumstances, video cannot clarify the issue and one can only conclude Riley was right to have awarded Chelsea's defence the benefit of the doubt. Not that Liverpool will ever think so.

All the succeeding issues concerned whether the ball had crossed the line into the goal. Two cases were in Spain. The first was Valencia's crucial second goal by Mista in a 2-1 derby defeat of Levante. The second was a non-goal by Igor Gabilondo of Real Sociedad in a 2-0 home defeat by Albacete when Sociedad were a goal down.

The most glaring injustice was in the goalless Premiership duel between Manchester United and Tottenham at Old Trafford, when home keeper Roy Carroll pulled back Pedro Mendes' wonderful half-pitch lob from way beyond his goal-line (top marks to Spurs boss Martin Jol and his players for the sporting manner in which they accepted the verdict). Even Sir Alex Ferguson conceded football should consider video assistance while, no doubt, grateful that it was not functioning yet.

Jol, victim of a similar incident in Holland last season, thought it incredible that mankind can put a man on the moon without being able to confirm whether someone has put a football into goal.

The International Board will watch a demonstration of a ball with an integrated sensor. This, surely, promises to be a start.

But of one factor you may be sure: once technology is through the door there will be no shutting it again.

Diego nurses playing ambition in 2005

DIEGO MARADONA has sent a message from his perpetual rest-cure nursing home in Cuba announcing his intention of tottering out to play in a benefit game scheduled for Naples in October. Not that everyone is a Maradona fan. Days after the travelling 'Maradona Museum' opened thieves broke in, dragged various exhibits out of their display cases and damaged several shirts and videos.

Not everyone's a fan...Maradona

Simonet warning for Platini

CLAUDE SIMONET, outgoing French federation president, is having second thoughts about the generosity of his decision to stand down and hand Michel Platini his place on the UEFA executive.

Platini quickly gained further election to the FIFA executive. Now he is being talked of as the next UEFA president in succession to Lennart Johansson.

In the excitement, however, Simonet fears Platini has forgotten his constituency back home.

Simonet says: "I get the impression Michel isn't in tune with what matters to French football and that he's not defending our interests the way he should. He seems to be in danger of forgetting he is French."

A major French concern is the transfer control loophole which permits foreign clubs – notably from England and Italy – to 'kidnap' teenage talent.

At odds...Platini (left) and Simonet (right), with League president Frederic Thiriez

Simonet is also upset that new international eligibility rules have cost France about 20 young players who have opted to represent their parents' African nations.

Platini – who dismissed Simonet's attack as "the last whimpers of a man who is on the way out" – will not have to put up with such sniping for long. Simonet steps down this year.

Sponsors keeping eye on the benefits

TURN UP at any stadium and it is impossible to escape the magic eye of the sponsors – whether on old-fashioned adverts, multi-faceted merchandise or electronic images chasing each other around the pitch perimeter.

But does it work? Is the incessant blaze of colour-crazed logos worth all the effort? Or is it merely a matter of keeping up – and blocking out – competitors? And how much power does it provide?

Manchester United, for example, appear to the naked visitor's eye to be far more in thrall to Vodafone and Nike than anyone else.

Not so, according to Mike Caldwell, the mobile phone group's corporate communications director. But a company whose international explosion has been marked by sponsor deals with not only United but also Ferrari in Formula One, England's cricket team and the Derby (Epsom not Pride Park version) must have some influence.

Caldwell says: "We monitor what's happening in 'our' sports every day to ensure that we are getting our message across. That's our main focus."

One way to broadcast that message is the use of United players through the sort of access that irritates jealous media. One Vodafone favourite is Ruud Van Nistelrooy because of his 'face' value in the Dutch marketplace.

That means Caldwell has to be a diplomat, balancing the asserting of his high-cost investment in United with an appreciation of Sir Alex Ferguson's managerial need for space in which to work...and thus achieve the results that reflect positively back on the sponsor.

"I'm happy to say we had as great a relationship with Peter Kenyon when he was chief executive," says Caldwell, "as we do now with David Gill. But if an issue arises which, we feel, may touch us as a sponsor then we make our views known. I wouldn't put it any higher than that."

Sponsorship is a strange beast. The World Cup is an ideal example. Some companies hand over their £26.4million to FIFA then appear to sit back and do little more than monitor the perimeter advertising.

Others – MasterCard is a prime example with its Pele-led promotions – have invested almost as much again in making the sponsorship work.

Vodafone employs around 50 people on its United contract, "with which we're very happy," says Caldwell. "It's proved a good investment."

The current second four-year sponsorship, worth £9m a year, expires in 2008. Then what? Football, like business, is results-driven. Caldwell says: "We start our review process around 18 months before the end of a contract."

By my reckoning, that makes 2006-07 an important season at Old Trafford. Ferguson still has time in which to perfect his own third generation.

Fronting up...United make sure their fans get the sponsors' message

Goodbye to all that

The World Club Cup is history but UEFA may regret letting FIFA get its foot in the club door, says Keir Radnedge

History makers...victorious Porto hoist the World Club Cup after the last game under the old format

THE CONCLUDING SECONDS of the last World Club Cup Final were a sadly fitting epitaph to an event more tortured than triumphant.

Porto's Brazilian forward Diego was sent off for taunting Once Caldas keeper Juan Carlos Henao in the opening exchange of the penalty shoot-out before John Edwin Garcia fired over the bar to present Pedro Emanuel with his moment of glory.

The Portuguese champions of Europe were worthy winners on the day but only the South American confederation harbours serious (financial) regrets at the demise of an occasion that rarely lived up to its grandiose billing.

Next December FIFA will bury the event within the revamped Club World Championship, to which the six regions will send their club champions. This may, hopefully, prove a better-tempered joust, though its whistle-stop concept and the chilled Japanese venue will not be conducive to any improvement in quality.

The old World Club Cup, also known as the Europe/South America Cup and the Intercontinental Club Cup, was ill-starred almost from the outset. Victory was never a stepping stone to greater things and just taking part often proved a bad omen.

Take unfortunate Once Caldas. They were surprise winners of last year's Libertadores Cup Final against Boca Juniors in a penalty shoot-out. But spot-kick fortunes were turned on their head in Yokohama and then, within days of their return to Colombia, coach Luis Fernando Montoya was shot twice and seriously wounded by armed robbers whom he confronted in his home.

Montoya was left partially paralysed in hospital, where his visitors included the state president of Colombia. But as Garcia said: "It's as if the soul has gone out of our club. What does one football match matter by comparison?"

For the record Porto dominated the match. Luis Fabiano and Benni McCarthy were twice each denied by a post. Derlei and McCarthy spurned the clearest other chances to spare everyone the bad-tempered confusion of the shoot-out and McCarthy was twice denied by offside flags.

Fates had appeared to be moving in Caldas' favour in extra-time when Porto's veteran keeper Vitor Baia was floored and substituted. But shoot-out work is often more a matter of luck than judgement. Deputy Nuno had little to do even before the penalties.

For Diego this was an opportunity to avenge an old hurt. He had been a grumpy member of the

Spot of glory...Pedro Emanuel beats Henao with the winning penalty

Santos side frustrated by the disciplined Caldas defensive unit in the Libertadores quarter-finals. He converted his opening spot-kick and was then sent off by referee Jorge Larrionda for insulting Henao.

The Caldas keeper appeared unperturbed. He very nearly reached most of Porto's other penalties and intimidated Maniche into hitting the bar.

Caldas could have won it there and then but Jonathan Fabbro hit a post instead. Ultimately, Garcia shot over the top and Pedro Emanuel provided Porto with a second world title, 17 years after the initial success in 1987. That left the closing balance between the continents at 22 for South America and 21 for Europe.

Henri Delauney, then UEFA's general secretary, first proposed a challenge between the champions of Europe and South America in a letter to CONMEBOL back in the late 1950s. His idea provided the impetus to get the Libertadores Cup up and running and, since then, South American clubs have rated the status of the World Club Cup far higher than their European cousins.

Not that this narrow superiority has been reflected in results over the past decade. Porto's latest win meant European clubs had won eight of the last 10 Finals. This underlined the increasing financial imbalance between the continents, just as Caldas' own Libertadores success pointed up the quality slip at club level among the traditional giants, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay.

The likes of Santos and Vasco da Gama, Boca Juniors and River Plate, Penarol and Nacional are losing their players to Europe at ever younger ages, not only to Italy and Spain, but even to Russia and Ukraine. The departure of River Plate's Fernando Cavenaghi for Moscow Spartak last year said as much about Argentinian football's impoverishment as it did about Russia's new money.

It was not always thus. Back in 1960, when Penarol won the first Libertadores to earn an inaugural – losing – crack at Real Madrid, the Uruguayans boasted all their senior stars such as Nestor Goncalves, Carlos Borges and Pedro Rocha. They were all back again a year later to beat Benfica, while Santos, in 1962, boasted their now-legendary full attacking complement of Dorval, Mengalvio, Coutinho, Pele and Pepe for a grandstanding victory over the Portuguese.

The next year, 1963, was when it all started to turn sour. Santos did not like being beaten 4-2 by Milan in the San Siro and covered for the injury absence of Pele by kicking back even harder in the Maracana. The play-off, again in Rio, proved a nasty taste of things to come, with a questionable Argentinian referee in Juan Brozzi, one player from each side sent off and a penalty deciding the outcome in the Brazilians' favour.

Argentina's ugly domination

Internazionale avenged Italy in the next two years at the expense of Independiente, who – with the exception of Penarol's revival in 1966 – ushered in an era of ugly domination by Argentinian clubs.

Racing clubbed Celtic in 1967 in the infamous tie during which the Scots' keeper Ronnie Simpson was felled by a missile before the start of the second leg and six players were sent off in the Montevideo play-off (one of them, Bertie Auld, refused to go – prompting an early final whistle).

Estudiantes, even more cynical, battered Manchester United into submission in 1968 but found Milan too resilient a year later. Three Estudiantes players were briefly jailed on the orders of the appalled president of Argentina.

After Feyenoord's Dick Van Dijk had his spectacles deliberately trodden into the ground by an Estudiantes boot in 1970, Ajax, the 1971 European champions, decided they could do without the trouble. Instead, they launched the European Supercup. When they did compete in the World event, and beat Independiente, their 'punishment' was a long-term knee injury for Johan Cruyff.

So it went on, with European champions frequently opting out – or sending their runners-up – until car manufacturer Toyota provided the cash to fund the Japanese Football Association's 'purchase' of the event in 1980. The JFA saw staging the World Club Cup as a promotional tool in its long-term bid to bring the World Cup to the Far East.

Japan may thus be said to have emerged as overall winners, though 2002 co-hosts South Korea would, of course, dispute even that.

Nacional of Uruguay were the first winners in Tokyo's old National stadium, against Nottingham Forest. Japan's love affair with Zico was kindled a year later when he inspired Flamengo's 3-0 destruction of Liverpool.

South America won nine of the 18 home-and-away Finals and all the first five in Tokyo. Europe won 12 of the subsequent 20 Japanese finals.

These were played latterly in Yokohama, rather than Tokyo, and it is the Yokohama International stadium that will host the Final of the revived FIFA Club World Championship this coming December.

Corinthians won the first Club World Championship in January 2000 beating fellow Brazilians Vasco in Rio de Janeiro. That was the tournament which sparked ongoing ill will in England over Manchester United's decision to put the world before the FA Cup. United had 'merely' responded to FA pressure to attend the event to support the ultimately vain 2006 World Cup bid.

A second Club Championship, scheduled for Spain in 2001, was cancelled after a catalogue of commercial catastrophes.

The third version – an annual event, not only to be staged in Japan – will be an eight-day extravaganza matching the champions of Africa, Asia, Central/North America and Oceania in preliminary ties for the right to face the champions of Europe and South America in the semi-finals.

This formulation has enabled FIFA to calm European concern over their clubs donating their so-valuable time when there are "more important things" like the Champions League to consider.

CONMEBOL, meanwhile, plans to keep the Intercontinental Club Cup alive by matching the winners of a duel between the holders of the Libertadores and the Sudamericana Cups against the European Supercup holders. How and when this may be fitted into FIFA president Sepp Blatter's unified calendar has yet to be explained.

However, I believe one day UEFA will come to regret allowing FIFA to get its foot wedged in the club door. Lennart Johansson and Lars-Christer Olsson may need an English lesson. What price the G-14 clubs, for example, taking a leaf out of the formation of the Premier League a decade ago and approaching the governing body with their ambitions for world domination?

MATCH FACTS

Dec 12 - International stadium, Yokohama

FC Porto (Por) 0

Once Caldas (Col) 0

***Aet.* Att: 45,748. Ref: Larrionda (Uru)**

Porto 8-7 on pens

SHOOT-OUT: (Caldas first): Vanegas 1-0, Diego 1-1 (Diego sent off); Alcazar 2-1, Carlos Alberto 2-2; Rojas 3-2, Ricardo Quaresma 3-3; De Nigris 4-3, Maniche 4-3; Fabbro 4-3, McCarthy 4-4. *Sudden death*: Velasquez 5-4, Costinha 5-5; Diaz 6-5, Jorge Costa 6-6; Catano 7-6, Ricardo Costa 7-7; Garcia 7-7, Pedro Emanuel 7-8.

PORTO: Vitor Baia (Nuno 105) - Seitaridis, Jorge Costa, Pedro Emanuel, Ricardo Costa - Costinha - Maniche, Diego - Derlei (Carlos Alberto 70), McCarthy, Luis Fabiano (Ricardo Quaresma 80).

ONCE CALDAS: Henao - Rojas, Vanegas, Cambindo (Catano 46), Garcia - Viafara, Velasquez, Arango (Diaz 61), Fabbro, Soto (Alcazar 97) - De Nigris.

Brazilian blend...Lincoln and Ailton, celebrating a goal against Bochum, have settled nicely into the Schalke system

Schalke reborn under Rangnick

GERMANY

IT WOULD NOT be polite to ask ex-Schalke boss Jupp Heynckes to comment on the club's rip-roaring form in the first half of the season. Shortly before being sacked last September, Heynckes was scathing about the players at his disposal. "The squad here has nothing to do with that of a top domestic club," he said. "It will be a long time before we can compete with the best in Germany."

How wrong can one man be? Since Heynckes was run out of town and new sheriff Ralf Rangnick given the tin star, Schalke have been a team reborn. They won 10 of their next 13 League games to go into the winter break in second place behind Bayern Munich on goal difference.

Many factors have contributed to Schalke's resurgence, with Rangnick's emphasis on attacking football and a switch from a three- to a four-man defence among the most important. Then there has been the rapid integration of three Brazilian summer signings – striker Ailton, playmaker Lincoln and central defender Marcelo Bordon – plus Serbia & Montenegro centre-back Mladen Krstajic. Frank Rost has been brilliant in goal and strike partners Gerald Asamoah and Dane Ebbe Sand have awoken from a long spell of under-achievement.

But even more crucial has been the new, improved atmosphere at the Gelsenkirchen club. Heynckes' 'my way or the highway' approach stands in stark contrast to Rangnick's more subtle and inclusive man-management style. The players have left no one in any doubt whom they prefer.

For all his claims that he would be happy with a top-five position come the end of the season, Schalke general manager Rudi Assauer knows full well he is underplaying his hand. This is a side with a sliver of steel running through it, and any team with such an impressive away record – Schalke have already won at Bayern, Hamburg, Leverkusen and arch Ruhr rivals Dortmund this term – should be challenging all the way for the title.

Meanwhile, the contentment at Bayern's Sabener Strasse headquarters is palpable. Early in

the season it had looked as if the wheels were coming off the wagon. Last season's runners-up took just eight points from their opening five League games and players were grumbling about the drill-sergeant regime of new coach Felix Magath. But a 4-0 Champions League victory over Ajax in late September quelled the dissenting noises, and from that moment on, their winning touch has rarely deserted them in the Bundesliga.

Bayern are playing attractively into the bargain. A major gripe of their fans last season was the team's disjointed, slow attacking play, with too many players cast as static onlookers and too few options for the man in possession. This term it is a different story. Magath demands a quicker, more fluid and proactive style than predecessor Ottmar Hitzfeld, and that is what he has been getting in spades.

One weakness, however, is at left-back. Bosnian Hasan Salihamidzic is far better on the right, while German international Tobias Rau has been plagued by injuries since arriving from Wolfsburg two years ago. In a mid-season attempt to remedy the problem, Bayern surprisingly chose to rewind the clock, bringing back veteran Frenchman Bixente Lizarazu only six months after he had left for Marseille.

Stuttgart and champions Werder Bremen, third- and fifth-placed respectively, are far from out of contention. Both have creativity and firepower in abundance, and in Matthias Sammer and Thomas Schaaf, each has a coach who knows what it takes to win the Bundesliga.

Coincidentally, both were the recipients of bad news recently, influential Bremen midfielder Fabian Ernst announcing he would be moving on a Bosman free to Schalke at the end of the season and Stuttgart left-back Philipp Lahm being ruled out for two months with a broken foot.

Impressive Wolfsburg

Several surprise packets have come to the fore during the opening four months of the season, none more impressive than Wolfsburg. Astutely led by Belgian coach Eric Gerets and built around the craft of Bulgarian left-winger Martin Petrov and the German-Argentinian strikeforce of Thomas Brdaric and Diego Klimowicz, the VW-backed club have rarely been out of the top five and even led for several rounds.

Hertha Berlin and Hannover were two others to punch above their weight. Rock bottom in early October, Hannover have been climbing steadily ever since, their success based on a solid rearguard and pacy counter-attacks. As for Hertha, they have the best defensive record in the entire Bundesliga (just 15 goals conceded in 17 games) and have already won five times on their travels, a mark equalled only by Schalke.

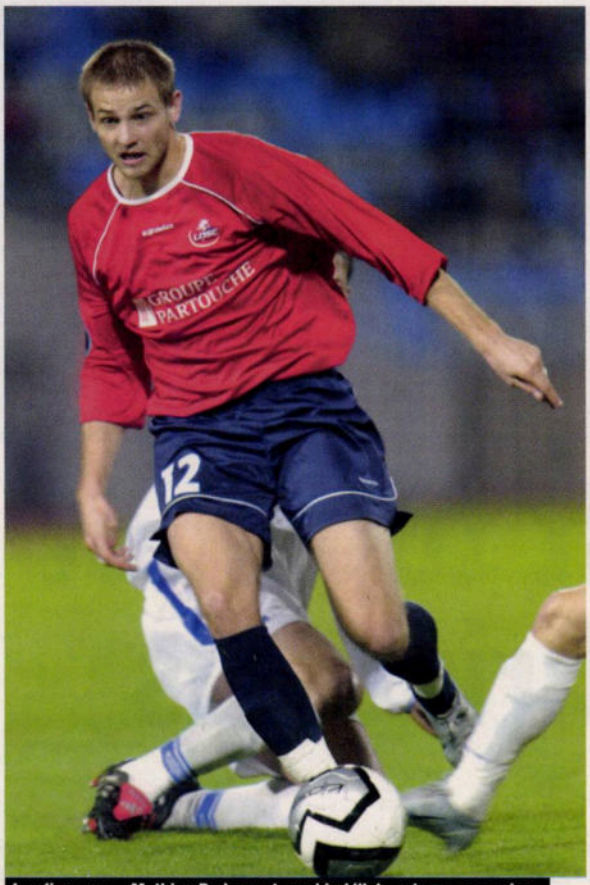
With just seven wins between them, Freiburg, Hansa Rostock and Bochum reek of death row, though the likes of Monchengladbach, Kaiserslautern and Dortmund could easily find themselves up to their necks in the relegation quicksand if they continue their slipshod work.

These are especially perilous times for Dortmund, who, thanks to debts of £100million, run the risk of losing their professional licence. This is unthinkable for a club that lifted the championship just two and a half years ago and who top the nation's attendance lists by a country mile (their average gate this season is over 77,000).

Nick Bidwell

Top show from under-dogues

FRANCE



Leading man…Mathieu Bodmer starred in Lille's autumn campaign

LILLE, WHO SUFFERED an exodus of their best players last summer, have surprised the doomsayers by ending 2004 second in the League, just three points behind champions Lyon. What's more, Claude Puel's side had the distinction of inflicting the only domestic defeat so far on the leaders, 3-2 in the League Cup.

Lille, whose logo sports the head of a bulldog and who go by the nickname The Dogues, kept hounding Lyon during the autumn campaign while other seemingly more likely title challengers such as Marseille and Monaco cowered in their wake.

Remarkably, the northern club, who finished only 10th last term, are also still in European competition having made it into the UEFA Cup via the InterToto Cup. They were admitted to the latter competition only after a number of clubs who finished above them opted not to take their berth. But Lille went all the way to the final round, where they beat Portugal's Uniao Leiria. They then overcame Irish side Shelbourne in the UEFA Cup first round and topped their group in the new-look competition with three wins out of four.

All this has been achieved despite having lost defenders Eric Abidal (Lyon) and Stephane Pichot (Paris Saint-Germain), and midfielder Benoit Cheyrou (Auxerre) during the summer sale.

Lille's embodiment of less is more has brought them much praise. Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger said: "At the beginning I didn't pay much attention to Lille's results. Then I watched them play Monaco [a 1-1 draw in November] and saw what a good team they were."

Legendary Auxerre coach Guy Roux heaped praise on Puel, saying: "He may be a quiet, low-profile coach for the media, but for us he is one of the most promising technicians. What he is achieving with a small group of 16 to 18 players is great."

Battle for Bodmer

Lille's star of the autumn was 22-year-old defensive midfielder Mathieu Bodmer, nicknamed the "White Vieira" by former PSG coach Luis Fernandez and known to have caught Wenger's eye.

But Lille's Lord Mayor, Martine Aubry, demands the club keep Bodmer at any cost. "If Bodmer goes at the end of the season it will be a scandal," said Aubry. "At the stage where we are starting the rebuilding of the [Grimonprez-Jooris] stadium to increase capacity to 33,000 I want the club to be ambitious. Lille, like every European city, deserves to have a great club."

However, the stadium rebuilding raises one of the biggest potential problems for the club. Until the scheduled completion in 2006 Lille are being force to play at the city's Stadium Nord, an exposed athletics arena in the suburbs. This is hardly conducive to top-quality football, and the worst-case scenario is they will have to stay there even longer.

There has already been a year's delay in the start of reconstruction work on the Grimonprez-Jooris after local residents went to court to fight it because they feared the expansion would be detrimental to the nearby castle. Although the court decided in December to let the work begin, a possible appeal could involve further delay.

Puel threatened recently that if there was no progress soon, not only would France's second-best team not have a stadium but they wouldn't have a coach, either.

Erik Bielderman

Mr Unbeatable...keeper Heurelho Gomes helped PSV set a Dutch record of 1159 minutes without conceding a goal

AZ hit top spot for Christmas

HOLLAND

AZ ALKMAAR took advantage of a surprise home defeat for PSV Eindhoven in the final League round before Christmas to go top of the table. In the process they became the first team from outside Holland's Big Three – Ajax, Feyenoord and PSV – to lead at the halfway stage since the 1980-81 season. AZ were also the club to do it back then and went on to win the championship, also the last time it escaped the clutches of the Big Three.

AZ's lead could hardly be slimmer, however, heading PSV by virtue of the fact they have scored two more goals since the clubs have the same points and goal difference.

The Alkmaar side hit the top with a 2-0 win at bottom club RBC Roosendaal while PSV were losing by the same score at home to mid-table Roda JC.

PSV had only just set a Dutch record when going 1159 minutes without conceding a goal, eclipsing the previous mark of 1082 set by Ajax in 1971.

PSV's new Brazilian keeper Heurelho da Silva Gomes did not play for the whole of the run, as Ajax's Heinz Stuy did in 1971, since an injury forced his replacement by Edwin Zoetebier for 259 of the minutes. Nevertheless, Gomes, known for his quick reflexes, has clearly developed a superb understanding with his defence in a very short time.

The Brazilian finally conceded a goal in the game before the Roda defeat, away to Feyenoord, when Salomon Kalou scored just after half-time to reduce PSV's lead to 2-1. PSV then restored their two-goal advantage only for Feyenoord to come back again and snatch a 3-3 draw.

Ajax, lying third, showed improved form towards the end of the autumn campaign after coach Ronald Koeman drastically changed the team following the departure of technical director Louis Van Gaal. John Heitinga and Wesley Sonck were the main victims of the reshaping, while Koeman also gave 18-year-old forward Ryan Babel a run. Now the coach has to find room for Greek striker Angelos Haristeas, who has signed from Werder Bremen. The Euro 2004 hero is the long-awaited successor to Zlatan Ibrahimovic, who joined Juventus just before the summer transfer window closed.

Feyenoord lost their final game of the autumn 2-0 at Den Haag to stand 11 points behind AZ and PSV. Dejected coach Ruud Gullit has asked for reinforcements, and midfielder Nicky Hofs (Vitesse) and striker Ali Boussaboun (NAC) have already been signed, with midfielder Edwin De Graaf (RBC) set to return. However, Feyenoord need defenders to try to end their habit of conceding goals from set-pieces.

Johan Neeskens became the first top-flight coach to get the sack this season, after the board of struggling NEC lost faith in his ability to turn round the club's fortunes. Neeskens, who had renewed his contract only last summer, is succeeded by assistant Cees Lok.

Finally, some fathers do have them! De Graafschap coach Gert Kruys now faces an even deeper relegation crisis after his side lost to a goal scored by his son, Ricky, a Utrecht substitute. "I don't want to see him for a while," said Kruys senior. "He won't get dinner when he comes home."

Jasper Goedbloed

PORTUGAL

Today the world, tomorrow Portugal?

For the ninth time in the past 10 seasons, FC Porto led the Superliga heading into the winter break. However, the defending champions should not start popping the champagne just yet. A one-point cushion over Sporting Lisbon and Benfica doesn't exactly ensure a third straight title, especially when one considers the erratic form Victor Fernandez's side have displayed throughout the present campaign.

The Dragons dropped 16 points in their first 15 games this term, only four fewer than their points-lost tally for the whole of last season (34 games). In order to retain their crown, Porto will surely have to improve their record at home, where they have already lost twice in eight games.

While domestic success is far from guaranteed, they once again gained international honours with victory over Once Caldas in the World Club Cup. The win, on penalties after a 0-0 draw, made it a hat-trick of continental titles in 18 months, following successes in the UEFA Cup and the Champions League. However, while the Porto players were celebrating their most recent triumph in Yokohama, the club's president found himself caught in a legal battle back home. Jorge Nuno Pinto da Costa was indicted on several counts of fraud and will have to defend himself in court over the next few months. It was the latest development in a corruption case that has already led to the suspension of a League executive and several top-class referees.

Of Porto's two main Lisbon rivals for the domestic championship, Sporting look the most likely to give them a real run for their money, with top scorer Liedson in inspirational form. Portugal midfielder Hugo Viana has also shown great improvement and could yet prove to be the key to Sporting's title challenge.

Pedro Pinto

AUSTRIA

Macho makes move to Germany

International keeper Jurgen Macho has signed for Kaiserslautern, his third foreign club, after starring for Rapid Wien during the autumn League campaign.

Macho, who has joined the German club on an 18-month contract, was previously in England, with Sunderland and then Chelsea.

The keeper has left Rapid with the club a point clear of Austria Wien

at the top of the table at the winter break.

Harry Miltner

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Shels add strength

Shelbourne are hot favourites to clinch their third successive League championship after making some impressive additions to an already successful squad ahead of the new campaign.

On the day Shels clinched the 2004 title, in November, manager Pat Fenlon announced he had secured the services of Glen Crowe, Bobby Ryan and Colin Hawkins from Dublin neighbours Bohemians. Since then, striker Gary O'Neill has switched from Dublin City and Richie Baker is returning to Tolka Park after a season in the United States.

Shamrock Rovers have been refused an extension of planning permission to finish their new stadium in Tallaght in the south of the capital. South Dublin County Council were not happy with some of the Hoops' financial backers. Since Rovers' former owners sold Glenmalure Park in 1987 they have ground-shared with various Dublin clubs.

FAI treasurer Joe Delaney has been appointed interim chief executive following the departure of Fran Rooney. Delaney says he will be applying for the job on a permanent basis.

Sean Creedon

LIECHTENSTEIN

Vaduz miss top spot

Vaduz missed the chance to finish the autumn campaign on top of the Swiss Second Division after losing 2-1 at home to Chiasso on the final day. Even so, they went into the winter break just two points behind leaders Yverden Sports. The Vaduz-Chiasso game was overshadowed by the epileptic fit suffered by the visitors' coach, Paul Schonwetter, who later recovered in hospital.

Graeme Crawford

SWITZERLAND

Free-spending Servette facing ruin

Servette, once one of the standard-bearers of Swiss football, are facing bankruptcy after running up debts of £6.8million. French club president Marc Roger has spent around £6.4m on 21 new players, including former French international Christian Karembeu and Romania's Viorel Moldovan, but reportedly none of the squad has been paid since October. Moldovan has already threatened to go to court if he does not receive any money soon.

Swiss League director Edmond Isoz sees a bleak future for the Geneva club, saying: "Many people would like to help. But no one is prepared in the long term to be saddled with their enormous salary commitments."

Former Thun boss Hanspeter Latour has taken over at Grasshopper after the sacking of Alain Geiger. The new man faces a stiff challenge to get the team back on course, with the club 13 points behind leaders Basle at the winter break.

Ivar von Rulach

Numbers game...Servette newcomer Christian Karembeu with owner Marc Roger

Leaders Brugge fall short

BELGIUM

CLUB BRUGGE'S satisfaction of going into the New Year with a seven-point League lead was tempered by their 2-1 defeat away to closest challengers Anderlecht in the penultimate round before the winter break. The loss meant Brugge fell one game short of equalling the club record of 32 League games without defeat and two short of Anderlecht's Belgian post-war record of 33.

The leaders also failed to reach the knockout stages of the UEFA Cup after finishing only fourth in their group following a 1-1 draw at home to Spain's Real Zaragoza.

Jump to it...Brugge's Gaetan Englebert hurdles a challenge from Michal Zewlakow of Anderlecht

At least Brugge did not suffer the humiliation of Standard Liege, who crashed out of the competition after a 7-1 thrashing at home by Athletic Bilbao. Beveren's campaign also ended in ignominy, with the 1-0 defeat to Dutch side Heerenveen completing their group stage whitewash.

Anderlecht also failed to gain a point in the Champions League, losing 3-0 to Internazionale in their final group game. Only four clubs have suffered the same fate – Kosice (1997-98), Fenerbahce (2001-02), Moscow Spartak and Bayer Leverkusen (both 2002-03).

Anderlecht will be without former Belgium defender Glenn De Boeck for the rest of the League campaign after he suffered cruciate ligament damage against Westerlo in late November. De Boeck had only just returned to action in October after a similar injury, also against Westerlo, 17 months earlier.

Brugge have reinforced their squad for the title run-in by signing Canadian left-back Michael Klukowski and Nigerian striker Manaseh Ishiaku from La Louviere.

Much-travelled coach Jos Daerden has taken over at bottom side Mons following the sacking of Sergio Brio after seven successive defeats.

Nicholas Harling

Rangers cash in on Boumsong

SCOTLAND

JANUARY'S TRANSFER WINDOW opened with the widely-predicted departure of French defender Jean-Alain Boumsong from Rangers to Newcastle. He had arrived at Ibrox on a free transfer from Auxerre last winter, and the debt-ridden Glasgow club could not resist the temptation to cash in on his £8million valuation so soon.

However, Boumsong's exit leaves a hole in Rangers' defence, with the club grimly hanging on to the coat-tails of champions Celtic at the League's halfway point.

Australian Craig Moore was another defender to leave Rangers, joining up again with his former Ibrox manager, Dick Advocaat, at Borussia Monchengladbach. Moore had been out of favour for several months having opted to play for his country at the Olympics rather than assist Rangers in the early stages of their Champions League campaign.

Rangers failed to make the group stage in that competition then exited the UEFA Cup at the group stage after losing 2-0 at home to Auxerre in their final game. Hearts also dropped out after finishing bottom of their group, while Celtic will be absent from the knockout stages, too, after propping up their Champions League group and so failing to win the consolation of a UEFA Cup place.

However, Celtic did open the New Year by beating their Old Firm rivals in the Scottish Cup. John Hartson scored the winner in the 2-1 defeat of Rangers, for whom Belgian Thomas Buffel made his debut after moving from Feyenoord.

Former Rangers captain Richard Gough has taken over as manager of Livingston following the departure of Allan Preston. Meanwhile, ex-Celtic defender Tony Mowbray has breathed fresh life into Hibernian since taking up his first managerial role. Hibs had risen to third place in the League at the turn of the year.

As expected, Walter Smith succeeded Berti Vogts as national coach. The former Rangers and Everton boss's first game will be the World Cup qualifier in Italy on March 26.

Alan Fairley

Border crossing...Rangers could not resist Newcastle's £8million offer for Boumsong

SWEDEN

Malmo keep winning crew

Champions Malmo have been installed as favourites to win the title again after keeping their already powerful squad intact. They even managed to add some firepower by bringing back Markus Rosenberg from his loan spell at Halmstads, where his 14 goals last term put him top of the League scoring chart.

The fans are relishing the prospect of Rosenberg partnering Brazilian Afonso Alves, runner-up in the 2004 goal chart with 12.

Malmo fans launched an internet campaign to keep Cameroonian left-back Joseph Elanga at the club. To their relief, his proposed transfer to Galatasaray fell through.

As well as losing Rosenberg, Halmstads will also have to do without playmaker Sharbel Touma, now at Dutch side Twente.

Zoran Lukic, sacked by Djurgardens last season, is the new coach of Orgryte.

Orebro have been forced to drop out of the top division after being refused a licence because of financial irregularities. Their place has been taken by Assyriska, who they beat in the relegation/promotion play-off at the end of last season.

Pentti Hietanen

FINLAND

Kottila makes tracks

Striker Mika Kottila has joined FC Lahti from HJK Helsinki, who have decided to reshape their team after one of their worst seasons in years.

Kottila replaces Njazi Kuqi, now at Birmingham, and is joined by another striker, Rafael. The Brazilian, a former League top scorer with HJK, refound his form last season with third division FJK after his career nosedived following a move to Holland.

Three Finns have moved to other Scandinavian countries. Sweden's Helsingborgs re-signed midfielder Fredrik Svanback from FF Jaro, Lyn of Norway snapped up Tornio striker Keijo Huusko and stopper Tuomas Aho left MyPa for Denmark's AGF Aarhus.

However, MyPa appear to have made a coup by luring forward Adriano from Allianssi. The Brazilian finished joint second in the national scorers' chart last term with 11 goals.

Pentti Hietanen

ICELAND

Coaching duo face the drop

Joint national coaches Asgeir Sigurvinsson and Logi Olafsson are under fire after Iceland finished

2004 in only 93rd place in the FIFA rankings. That represents a fall of no fewer than 58 places since the duo took charge, the largest drop of any country over the period.

More importantly, Iceland have already lost virtually all hope of reaching the 2006 World Cup finals, having taken only one point from their first four qualifiers, and that was from a 0-0 draw with 134th-ranked Malta.

Rab Christie

ESTONIA

Argo and Mati quit at top

Argo Arbeiter and Mati Pari have both decided to end their careers on a high, having just won the championship with Levadia Tallinn.

Two Russian coaches have joined Estonian clubs, Grigory Yevtuchenko taking charge at Merkuur Tartu and Vyacheslav Bulavin coming in as assistant at Tallinna VMK.

Andres Must

LATVIA

Verpakovskis best again

Maris Verpakovskis capped an excellent 2004 by retaining the Latvian Footballer of the Year award, the first player to achieve the feat. The 25-year-old forward polled 78 per cent of the votes having shone for both his country at Euro 2004 and club side Kyiv Dynamo.

National coach Jurijs Andrejevs lost his first two games in charge since replacing Aleksandrs Starkovs, Latvia going down 3-2 to Oman in the Bahrain four-nation tournament semi-finals and then on penalties to the hosts in the third-place play-off after a 2-2 draw.

Andres Must

WALES

Welshpool wreck TNS party

League leaders Total Network Solutions lost their unbeaten record as they crashed 5-2 away to Welshpool Town on New Year's Day.

Nick Tucker, who succeeded Eddie May in charge of bottom side Llanelli, had an immediate impact, overseeing their 5-1 hammering of high-flying Bangor City. Dixie McNeil has taken over from Alan Morgan at Newi Cefn Druids after a series of poor results.

Mel Thomas

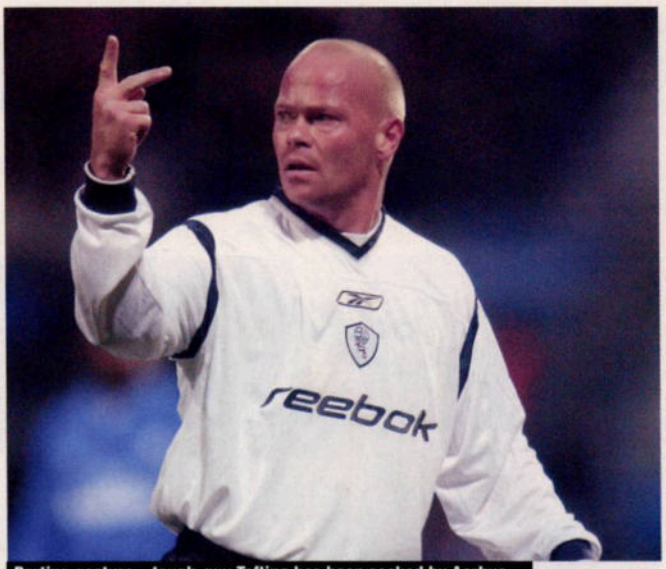
NORTHERN IRELAND

Linfield halt Glens run

Glentoran's run of 11 League wins, equalling a post-war club record, ended after they were held to a 1-1 draw by Linfield in the Belfast derby. But Glens were still six points clear of their rivals, the champions, at the top.

Institute manager Paul Hegarty resigned after his team lost 1-0 at home to bottom-of-the-table Omagh Town. It was visitors' first win of the season at the 13th attempt. Omagh, under new manager Paul Kee, followed up by winning 4-3 away to Coleraine and 3-0 at home to Larne.

Roy Kitson



Parting gesture...tough-guy Tofting has been sacked by Aarhus

Stig in the dumps

DENMARK

THE CAREER OF hardman Stig Tofting may be over after yet another violent incident. The 35-year-old was sacked by hometown club AGF Aarhus after a clash with team-mate Soren Pedersen at a players' Christmas party. Tofting, capped 41 times by Denmark, was convicted of assault after attacking a chef in Copenhagen three years ago and had further bust-ups in Aarhus last summer.

Capital rivals Brondby and FC Copenhagen drew 1-1 before more than 21,000 in the first group stage of Scandinavia's new Royal League competition. They trailed Swedish Group B leaders IFK Gothenburg at the halfway stage.

Jon Dahl Tomasson's fine form for Milan and the national team earned him Denmark's Player of the Year award. Nordsjaelland have appointed former Herfolge coach Johnny Petersen after sacking Christian Andersen.

Jim Holden

Andresen gives Brann fibre

Record buy...Andresen has moved for £1.2million

NORWAY

CUP HOLDERS BRANN have received a major fillip ahead of the new season after beating champions Rosenborg in the race to sign Martin Andresen from relegated Stabaek. The midfielder and national team captain cost Brann a club record £1.2million, but his arrival boosts their hopes of improving on last season's third-place finish.

Rosenborg found some consolation when securing the services of Alexander Odegaard, Norway's Young Player of the Year, from Sogndal.

Lillestrom have appointed former player Uwe Rosler as coach following the departure of Arne Erlandsen to IFK Gothenburg. Rosler, who also played for Manchester City and Southampton, completed his coaching diploma in his native Germany last spring having been forced to end his playing career in 2003 after being diagnosed with chest cancer. He has now made a full recovery after having a tumour removed.

Lillestrom also have a new German keeper, Heinz Muller, from Odd Grenland, from whom the club also signed midfielder Anders Rambakk. Muller replaces Emile Baron, who has returned to his native South Africa.

Former Valerenga central defender Erik Hagen will become the first Norwegian to play in Russia's top flight after joining Zenit St Petersburg. Valerenga, meanwhile, have signed national Under-21 captain Christian Grindheim from Haugesund.

Sigurd Odegaard

Kranjcar's heavy problem

CROATIA

Making the weight...Kranjcar (left) in action against Dnipro of Ukraine in 2003 – but he's now deemed too heavy to play

DINAMO ZAGREB captain Niko Kranjcar appeared set to leave the crisis-ridden club during the January transfer window, having lost his first-team place since the arrival of coach Ilija Loncarevic in November. Loncarevic, Dinamo's fourth coach this season, opted not to field the 20-year-old midfielder, claiming he had put on too much weight.

Dinamo's form hardly picked up without Kranjcar, who is widely recognised as the most creative talent in the domestic game. A 1-0 defeat away to League leaders Hajduk Split on the final day of the autumn campaign left Dinamo eight points behind their arch-rivals.

The capital side's lack of progress prompted the resignation of sports director Otto Baric. The ex-national coach had held the post for only two months.

Rangers forward Dado Prso won the Croatian Player of the Year award for the second time, ahead of Shakhtar Donetsk midfielder Darijo Srna and Werder Bremen forward Ivan Klasnic. The award was decided by a panel of 11 former national team players.

Miroslav Blazevic, Croatia's 1998 World Cup coach, received a comprehensive rejection in his bid to become state president when gaining only 0.8 per cent of votes cast in the recent election.

Zdravko Reic

GREECE

Big clubs face ban

A number of clubs risk being banned from the League next season by having their licences revoked because they have not met stipulated financial requirements.

The Development Ministry has warned clubs whose net worth is less than 10 per cent of equity capital that they must inject at least half of the sum needed to meet the required level now and then find the remaining money by June. Top-flight sides Iraklis, AEK Athens and Aris are among those clubs who currently have unsatisfactory net-worth figures.

The ultimatum is the latest effort to bring financial stability to domestic clubs and rid them of corrupt internal dealings.

The national squad and coach Otto Rehhagel have finally received bonuses of £125,000 each, some six months after winning Euro 2004.

Lou Economopoulos

SLOVENIA

Gorica look set to clean up

Gorica, the club sponsored by casino group HIT, look set to scoop the jackpot in the League after going into the winter break 10 points clear of closest challengers Publikum. Gorica were on the edge of bankruptcy only two years ago, but are now back on an even keel off the field and, after appointing coach Pavel Pinni, boast a young, talented team on it.

Their success is in stark contrast to Slovenia's traditional powerhouses, Olimpija Ljubljana and Maribor. The latter were 13 points behind Gorica at the winter shutdown, while the former, only two points better off, have just lost half their team. Aleksandar Popovic, Enes Handangic, Fausto Budicin and Branko Ilic have all had their contracts cancelled because Olimpija could not afford to pay them. Meanwhile, Tonci Zlogar has moved to Cyprus and Bostjan Cesar has returned to Dinamo Zagreb.

Even more galling for Olimpija is the loss of teenage sensation Blaz Brezovacki to Benfica. The 17-year-old has been widely hailed as the most promising Slovenian talent for many years, and his early departure from the domestic game has caused outrage across the country. Fans have largely directed their anger at Zlatko Zahovic, Slovenia's best known player, who is thought to have played a part in the move since he is on Benfica's books.

Zdravko Reic

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Ex-keeper arrested over child kidnap

Former Zeljeznicar goalkeeper Ramiz Brajlovic has been arrested in connection with the kidnapping of the son of crosstown club Sarajevo's director of sport, Mirza Varesanovic.

Brajlovic is alleged to have been part of the gang who abducted seven-year-old Mak at his school gate and then sent his father a ransom demand for £700,000.

Varesanovic, a former Bosnia-Herzegovina international, informed the police immediately, and they rescued the boy two days later from the flat where he had been held after a tip-off from a member of the public. One of the gang reportedly killed himself during the rescue mission.

Zrinjski are on course to win the championship in their centenary year after going into the winter break two points clear of Zeljeznicar. The Mostar side's standout performer is Sulejman Smajic, recently named Player of the Year by newspaper *Avazov Sport*.

Zdravko Reic

MACEDONIA

Vasoski and Pandev are prize guys

Vardar Skopje defender Aleksandar Vasoski was named home-based Player of the Year for 2004, with Lazio forward Goran Pandev taking the overseas accolade. Vasoski showed consistently good form for both club and country last year, while Pandev scored one of the best goals of the season in Serie A, against League leaders Juventus, and also hit four goals for Macedonia during 2004. Vardar's Ivan Trickovski took the best young player award.

Rabotnicki Kometal went into the winter break 10 points clear of closest challengers Vardar, having dropped only five points in their opening 17 games.

Gordan Zdravkov has become the third coach this season to take the helm at struggling Bregalnica following the departure of Mijalce Madzunarov. The latter had been in charge for only nine games since succeeding Vlatko Kostov.

Macedonian international Dragan Cadikovski, 22, has joined Russia's Zenit St Petersburg from Publikum of Slovenia.

Michel Stojmanovski

ISRAEL

Haifa steam on

Defending champions Maccabi Haifa have all but wrapped up the League title again with the season less than halfway through after taking a 13-point lead.

While Haifa, still unbeaten after 15 games, steam ahead, the championship challengers of recent seasons have been falling apart at the seams. Maccabi Tel Aviv are suffering a bad dose of inconsistency; Hapoel Tel Aviv are bottom of the table and in serious relegation danger; and Beitar Jerusalem, never the most organised of outfits, are also in a slump. Instead, the nearest challengers to Haifa are the relatively unsung outfits of SC Ashdod and Maccabi Petach Tikva.

Ori Lewis

MALTA

Valletta hit top note

Valletta's dramatic 3-2 win over champions and leaders Sliema Wanderers has thrown the title race wide open, with follow-up victories over Msida St Joseph and St Patrick putting Valletta three points clear of their rivals.

It was Sliema's first defeat of the season and they then also lost 2-0 to Birkirkara in the Super Five Cup Final. The champions moved swiftly in their attempt to stop the rot, bolstering their squad with the signing of international midfielder Etienne Barbara from Marsaxlokk.

St Patrick bagged their first two points of the season with a goalless draw against Marsaxlokk and a 2-2 draw against Hibernians.

Domenico Aquilina

Partizan have spring in step

Award-winning...Schalke's Mladen Krstajic

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

PARTIZAN BELGRADE made it through to the UEFA Cup knockout stages to become the first side from Serbia & Montenegro to continue in European competition after the winter break since 1992.

Partizan will also go into the domestic League's spring campaign on top of the table – they led Red Star by three points at the shutdown – and are through to the Cup semi-finals.

The club's success earned Vladimir Vermezovic the Coach of the Year accolade. Mladen Krstajic won the Player award after helping Werder Bremen to take the German Double. The 30-year-old defender is now with Schalke.

Vladimir Petrovic's stint as coach of Vojvodina Novi Sad lasted less than a month, during which time the club played only one friendly, after he resigned in order to take the reins at Chinese club Dalian Shide.

Vladimir Novak

Pas mark...Denizli is now in Iran

Gunes and Denizli go home and away

TURKEY

AS THE LEAGUE took a breather over the New Year, it was all go for two former national coaches, with Mustafa Denizli and Senol Gunes both returning to the headlines with unexpected new jobs.

Denizli, who led Turkey to the Euro 2000 finals, has taken the helm at Iranian champions Pas on an 18-month contract. Although the Tehran side have struggled this season, recently plummeting to 11th place in the 16-team top flight, Denizli has stated high ambitions. "Our big aim is to win the Asian Cup...and we are also aiming for the Iranian Federation Cup and the championship," he said.

Meanwhile, the coach has been keen to dampen speculation in the media that his contract could be worth as much as £1.3million. "I'm worried for my safety," Denizli told the *Milliyet* newspaper, "that one day someone is going to stop me in the street and say: 'You got this much money so hand it over.' "

While Denizli has travelled afar to add spice to his career, Gunes has made a homecoming. The coach, who took Turkey to the 2002 World Cup semi-finals, has taken the reins at Trabzonspor, where he first made his name as a goalkeeper.

Gunes, without a coaching job since being sacked by Turkey last year, sounded cautious when talking about his new three-and-a-half-year contract. He described his return to Trabzonspor, currently third in the League, as "unexpected", said the negotiations took a long time because of his indecision, and that he finally accepted because of pressure from the "Trabzonspor community".

Suna Erdem

Losing battle...Wisla's Marcin Baszczynski slides into a tackle as his side go down to Dinamo Tbilisi in the UEFA Cup

Two-coach pile-up

POLAND

WISLA KRAKOW, the defending champions and unbeaten League leaders, have descended into chaos after appointing a new coach, Werner Licka, while the old one, Henryk Kasperczak, is still under contract. The farcical situation of having two coaches, both saying they should be the one to prepare the team for the spring campaign, proved too much for owner Boguslaw Cupial, who has decided to pull out and sell up his share of the club.

Although Kasperczak steered Wisla into an eight-point lead in the League at the winter break he had been under pressure since they once again failed to reach the group stage of the Champions League – Cupial's major goal since he took a controlling interest seven years ago – and then failed to reach the UEFA Cup group stage after losing to Georgia's Dinamo Tbilisi.

But while Cupial and the board apparently wanted a new coach, the catalyst for the move to bring in Licka seems to have been the election of Janusz Basalaj as president two weeks earlier. Basalaj did not sack Kasperczak, merely attempted to sideline him hoping he would resign so the club would not have to pay compensation of £600,000. A statement said Kasperczak, under contract until 2008, "was only suspended and will remain at the club".

Wisla then appointed Licka, a Czech, who left Gornik Zabrze to take up the post. However, Kasperczak dug in his heels, saying: "I am still the club coach and manager. I want to start the preparation with my team after the winter break." Licka responded: "It must all be a joke."

Cupial's ensuing withdrawal means that, in theory, Wisla now owe £13.5million to Tele-Fonika, his cable company, who, he claims "only lent them the money". This adds potential financial woes to the club, though some cash has come in during the winter break with Wisla's sale of Poland midfielder Damian Gorawski to FC Moscow for £950,000.

Bayer Leverkusen midfielder Jacek Krzynowek has been voted Poland's Footballer of the Year.

Dariusz Kurowski

RUSSIA

Sychev hailed by press

Lokomotiv Moscow striker Dmitri Sychev has won the Player of the Year award, decided by a poll of football writers. The 21-year-old international helped his club regain the League title from CSKA Moscow last year, scoring 15 goals in 27 games.

Lokomotiv have been strengthening their squad ahead of their title defence, signing international defender Alexei Bugaev and Russian youth team striker Igor Lebedenko from Torpedo Moscow, and goalkeeper Alexei Polyakov from Kryliya Sovetov Samara.

Under new rules, clubs will be allowed to name a maximum of eight foreign players for any one game next season but only five will be allowed on the pitch at any one time.

Victor Gusev

ROMANIA

Victor retakes the reins

Victor Piturca has taken charge of the national team for the second time but faces a tough challenge in turning round their fortunes.

Piturca succeeded Anghel Iordanescu, whose last match in charge was a disappointing 1-1 World Cup qualifying draw away to Group 1 bottom side Armenia in mid-November. The result meant Romania lost top spot to Holland and compounded off-field problems, with several key players having ignored calls to join up with the squad after falling out with Iordanescu.

Piturca has already taken steps to bring certain 'exiles' back into the fold, saying: "I have had promises from Tiberiu Ghioane [Shakhtar Donetsk] and Dorinel Munteanu [Steaua Bucharest] that they will rejoin the national team." The new coach is also angling to bring striker Viorel Moldovan, midfielder Florin Soava and defender Iulian Filipescu out of international retirement.

As for Iordanescu, his decision to step down to pursue a career in politics backfired after he lost in his bid to become a senator for the Democratic Social Party during the recent general election.

Radu Timofte

UKRAINE

Sheva adds to silverware

Andrii Shevchenko has won the Ukrainian Player of the Year award for the fifth time, adding to his European Footballer of the Year accolade. The Milan forward finished ahead of Shakhtar Donetsk midfielder Anatoliy Tymoshchuk and Bayer Leverkusen forward Andrii Voronin in the poll.

Shakhtar reached the halfway point of the League season one point ahead of champions Kyiv Dynamo thanks to an impressive 4-1 home win over Illichivets. Meanwhile, the club have signed 23-year-old Paraguayan Pedro Benitez from Cerro Porteno for £780,000.

Illichivets coach Mykola Pavlov resigned shortly after the defeat by Shakhtar after seven seasons in charge, while Petro Slobodyan lost his job at Obolon after a string of poor results. His replacement is former Borysfen boss Olexander Rabokohn.

Oleg Zadernovsky

SLOVAKIA

Rosy picture for Artmedia

Artmedia Bratislava went into the two-month winter break top of the table after Dubnica, who had set the pace for much of the autumn, slipped up in their final game. Their 3-0 loss at Spartak Trnava allowed Artmedia, 1-0 winners over Trencin, to leapfrog them.

Ruzomberok's Roland Stevko, last season's League top scorer, is reportedly close to signing for Spanish Second Division side Tenerife; Zilina have confirmed interest in striker Stanislav Sestak from a number of foreign clubs and there has been speculation over Sestak's team-mate Dusan Sninsky after he was benched by coach Ladislav Jurkemik for the last four games before the break. The midfielder was widely hailed as one of the driving forces behind Zilina's title triumph last season.

Pavol Stracansky

HUNGARY

Fradi hit by cost of living

Champions and League leaders Ferencvaros are facing a financial crisis after their participation in this season's new-look UEFA Cup stretched their minimal budget to the limit. Sports director Ignac Tepszics acknowledged the problems caused by the increased number of games in this season's competition, saying: "The extra expenses of travelling and accommodating foreign visitors have hit us hard. I honestly don't know how we're going to make it through the rest of the season if we can't come up with something."

Peterjon Cresswell

MOLDOVA

Covaliciuc crowned again

Moscow Spartak midfielder Serghey Covaliciuc has been named Moldova's Player of the Year for the second time running, seeing off the challenge from two other Russia-based players – Radu Rebeja (FC Moscow) and Serguei Dadu (CSKA Moscow).

Miron Goihman

BELARUS

Dinamo end seven-year itch

Dinamo Minsk finished five points clear of closest challengers BATE Borisov to win the championship for the first time in seven years. Lokomotiv Vitebsk and Belshina Bobruisk were relegated.

Sergey Podpalyi has quit as coach of Torpedo Minsk to join Russian side FC Nosta. Meanwhile, Mikhail Markhel has replaced Vladimir Kurnev as coach of Dinamo Brest.

Oleg Zadernovsky

ARMENIA

Manucharyan move on hold

Precocious Player of the Year Edgar Manucharyan broke a leg during Pyunik Yerevan's recent friendly against Barcelona, delaying a potentially lucrative move abroad. The 17-year-old, joint top League scorer with 21 goals last season, has just had trials at Ajax. However, the champions have received some healthy transfer income after selling keeper Apula Bete to Bordeaux and striker Galust Petrosyan, joint top scorer with Manucharyan last term, to Moldova's Zimbru Chisinau.

Vladimir Kalinkovich

Out in front...Berbatov

Berbatov the best

BULGARIA

DIMITAR BERBATOV was named Bulgarian Player of the Year for the second time in recognition of his goalscoring form for both his club side, Bayer Leverkusen, and Bulgaria. The forward, who previously won the award in 2002, finished ahead of young Lecce forward Valeri Bojinov and Wolfsburg midfielder Martin Petrov in the poll of journalists.

CSKA Sofia and city rivals Levski went into the winter break locked on 39 points at the top of the League, both still unbeaten after 15 games.

Teenage Litex Lovech defender Ivan Bandalovski has joined Feyenoord in Holland, while Brazilian midfielder Tiago Silva has also left Lovech for CSKA.

Michael Bowesfield

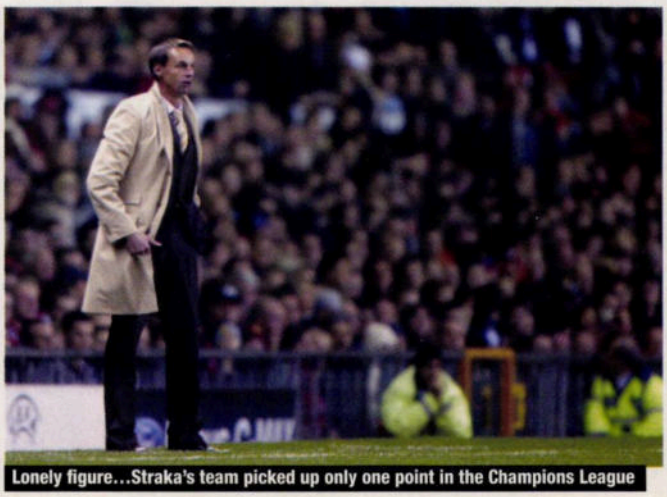
Straka pays price for Euro flop

CZECH REPUBLIC

SPARTA PRAGUE sacked coach Frantisek Straka as the winter break began despite the club being nine points clear at the top of the League. But Straka paid the price for Sparta's poor Champions League showing, in which they picked up just one point from their six group games and signed off with an embarrassing 5-0 defeat by a virtual Lyon reserve team.

His replacement is Jaroslav Hrebik, who led Sparta to the second group phase of the Champions League in 2002 only to be sacked because of the team's poor League form.

Sam Beckwith



Lonely figure...Straka's team picked up only one point in the Champions League

LIBERTADORES CUP

Away goals win

THE AWAY GOALS rule will make a welcome debut in the Libertadores Cup this year, adding further spice to a contest that has been steadily improving over the past few years but has been blighted by too many penalty shoot-outs.

The fact there has been no away goals rule, or extra-time, has meant five of the past six Finals being settled by the penalty lottery. Coincidentally, the winners of those shoot-outs – Palmeiras (1999), Boca Juniors (2000 and 2001), Olimpia (2002) and Once Caldas (2004) – would all have lost, except Boca in 2001, had the away goals rule been in force.

The 2005 edition features 38 teams, although six will quickly be eliminated in a 'first round' that in reality is more a preliminary round of home-and-away ties. After that, the competition is almost identical to the UEFA Champions League, with eight groups of four teams followed by knockout stages.

The Libertadores may not have the glamour of its European counterpart but in many ways it is a more interesting tournament. It has largely shaken off its reputation for skulduggery, dirty tricks and violence and is generally a more open contest. Last year, eight of the 11 countries that entered clubs managed to get at least one of their representatives into the knockout stages.

This year, four teams will be making their debuts: Pachuca (Mexico), Santo Andre (Brazil), Tacuary (Paraguay) and Banfield (Argentina).

The draw itself was an odd affair, mainly because it took place at the start of December, before most national championships had been settled. The ceremony, held in a huge tent outside the lavish Asuncion headquarters of the South American confederation (CONMEBOL), was glamorous enough, with names such as Mario Zagallo and Ecuador's Alberto Spencer, the highest goalscorer in the competition's history, among those pulling the balls from glass pots. But only 13 teams had qualified by that stage, with the result that most balls contained names such as Colombia 3 (the third Colombian representative).

The presence of the three Mexican clubs remains an anomaly, even though it has boosted both the technical level of the competition itself as well as Mexican football. One of the problems is that the current Mexican champions cannot take part as they are obliged to play in the CONCACAF Champions Cup. Instead, the next eight best teams play a mini-tournament in the United States to find two representatives. The other is decided by a play-off between the 2003 closing champions and the winners of the 2004 opening campaign.

CONMEBOL also needs to bring Argentina into line. Unlike the other South American countries, their season is not played over a calendar year but instead in two championships either side of New Year. This means that Newell's Old Boys, who have just won the 2004-05 opening championship, will have to wait until 2006 to take part in the Libertadores, when they are likely to have a substantially different team.

Brian Homewood

Celebration time...but Once Caldas would have lost to Boca Juniors in last year's Final if away goals had applied

SUDAMERICANA CUP

Heading for victory...Palermo scores in the Final

Boca find consolation

BOCA JUNIORS, who used only reserve teams early on in their Sudamericana Cup campaign, went on to win the Final, using a full-strength side, after realising the competition was their only chance of picking up silverware in what had been an otherwise disappointing year.

Their 2-1 aggregate win over Bolivar of Bolivia brought some consolation, having lost on penalties to Colombia's Once Caldas in the Libertadores Cup Final, gone down to last year's Sudamericana Cup winners Cienciano of Peru in South America's Supercup – the Recopa – and flopped in the opening championship of the Argentinian League.

The first leg of the Final was played in La Paz, at 11,500ft, and Boca did well to come away with just a 1-0 defeat, Horacio Chiorazzo scoring in the 75th minute. But there was little doubt about the destination of the trophy after they took a 2-0 lead in the first 30 minutes of the return in Buenos Aires. Martin Palermo scored his 100th goal for Boca and Carlos Tevez his last before his move to Brazil's Corinthians.

Boca reached the Final after hitting four goals in 15 minutes against Internacional of Brazil in the semi-final. That tie ended 4-2, with the return a 0-0 draw. The first-leg spree ended Boca's worst ever goal drought – 543 minutes.

Bolivar had become the first Bolivian club to reach a continental Cup Final after beating Ecuador's LDU Quito 3-2 on aggregate.

Eric Weil

Alianza spot on after close shave

PERU

ALIANZA LIMA beat arch-rivals Sporting Cristal on penalties to win the 2004 championship despite a dismal second half of the campaign that almost cost them a place in the end-of-season Final.

Alianza, under Argentinian coach Gustavo Costas, qualified by winning the year's opening championship, but, under the intricate rules, still needed a top-six finish in the closing campaign to keep the right to play in the deciding game.

They nearly blew it. With one match to go, Alianza were seventh, and only a controversial 2-2 draw away to Cienciano allowed them to sneak into the top six, on goal difference. Three players were sent off and the game ended with police attacking Alianza players with truncheons while the home fans hurled sticks and stones on to the field after Aldo Olcese's 84th-minute equaliser.

Alianza striker Flavio Maestri, who scored their first goal, was not involved in the rumpus – which made a change from his behaviour of a few weeks earlier. Maestri, sent off after seven minutes on his last appearance for Peru, against Argentina in September, burst into the office of television presenter Carlos Navarro, one of his many critics, and attacked him. Navarro had incensed the burly striker by wearing a bright red nose every time he mentioned him. "When I talk about Maestri, I talk about a clown," Navarro explained to his viewers.

Cristal, meanwhile, had wrapped up the *clausura* with two matches to spare and were able to calmly prepare for the Final while Alianza were scrambling to qualify. It was not surprising, then, that Cristal took early control in the one-off match, but they lost the initiative when full-back Miguel Villalta was sent off after less than half an hour. Cristal still held out for a goalless draw, but succumbed 5-4 in the shoot-out.

The fact the tournament actually finished was a significant improvement on the 2003 effort, which was cancelled after a players' two-month strike. But not everything went smoothly. Estudiantes de Medicina pulled their team out of the competition in a fit of pique after the League confirmed they would be demoted because of financial meltdown. The players carried on under their own steam for another month before finally giving in after a 4-2 defeat by Cristal, when they were forced to field their reserve keeper in midfield to make up the numbers.

Deportivo Wanka joined Estudiantes in the drop after the League overturned their 1-0 win over Universidad San Martin and awarded it as a 2-0 defeat against them as punishment for Wanka's attempt to pay off debts to the League with a cheque that bounced. The club were indignant but the dubious tactics they used in their ill-fated attempt to stay up deprived them of much sympathy. Instead of playing in their home town of Huancayo, Wanka decided to stage matches in Cerro de Pasco – at 14,000 feet above sea level. The Lima teams, in particular, were livid. "It's inhumane to play here," fumed Universitario coach Luis Reyna after his team faced hail, rain and near-freezing temperatures during a 2-2 draw.

Brian Homewood

My boys done good...coach Pelusso is embraced by an assistant after Danubio win the championship

Danubio buck the trend

URUGUAY

DANUBIO BROKE WITH tradition by becoming the first team other than Penarol and Nacional to win the championship since 1991. The team from the working-class Montevideo district of Jardines del Hipodromo dominated the competition, winning two of the three stages, although they almost came unstuck in the end-of-season Final against Nacional.

Faced by Nacional's greater tradition and their army of fans, Danubio capitulated to a 4-1 defeat in their opponents' Centenario stadium. Ignacio Risso gave Danubio a 26th-minute lead but Nacional hit back with three goals before half-time, Martin Liguera equalising in the 32nd minute before Gustavo Mendez sprang into action to score twice in the space of four minutes.

Risso then missed a penalty in the second half before Fabian Coelho added Nacional's fourth.

The second leg was played only three days later but there was still time for a furious row over the venue.

Danubio insisted they should be allowed to use their own stadium, while Nacional demanded the Centenario stage the game. Danubio president Arturo del Campo claimed Nacional were trying to gain an unfair advantage, saying: "Next thing, they will want us to play barefoot with nine men."

But the decision went Danubio's way and they won the second leg 1-0 to clinch the title on having the better record over the whole season. Substitute Diego Perrone scrambled an injury-time winner with Danubio down to 10 men after Guillermo Rodriguez was sent off.

"This is for those who thought Danubio were dead," said coach Gerardo Pelusso. It was the first title for the 50-year-old, who has earned his living with unfashionable clubs in Uruguay and Chile, and one achieved largely with a squad of journeymen such as goalkeeper Luis Barbat and leading scorer Risso. Barbat has also played in Argentina, Colombia and Chile, while 27-year-old Risso played for Lanus in Argentina and Liga de Quito in Ecuador before returning home.

Danubio have two Brazilians in their line-up – defender Cafu and midfielder Jadson Viera. Midfielder Omar Pouso is their only international.

It was only the second title for the club, whose previous victory came in 1988.

Brian Homewood

Champion farewell...Gallego takes the plaudits from the Newell's Old Boys fans

Americo enjoys dream ending

ARGENTINA

AMERICO GALLEGO has quit Newell's Old Boys at the top, stepping down in order to spend more time with his Buenos Aires-based family after leading the Rosario club to the opening championship. It was Newell's first League title since 1992, and Gallego's fourth, having previously won two with River Plate and one with Independiente.

The 49-year-old coach created a well-balanced side, with experienced players such as keeper Justo Villar, defender Julian Maidana, midfielders Ruben Capria and Ariel Zapata, and forward Ariel Ortega blended with an outstanding crop of home-grown youngsters.

Defenders Sebastian Dominguez, Luciano Vella and German Re, all 23, formed an extremely tight unit that had the best record in the League – only 11 goals conceded in 19 games.

There had been doubts about Newell's chances early in the tournament, especially since they had sold Mauro Rosales – last season's outstanding player – to Ajax. Part of the money was used to buy out Ortega's contract with Fenerbahce, allowing him to play again for the first time in two years since walking out on the Turkish club. It was a risky move, but it paid off, with Ortega quickly finding his form.

That said, the erratic form of challengers Velez Sarsfield during the run-in made a major contribution to the outcome. Velez's consecutive wins over River Plate and Estudiantes, the two other contenders, effectively put them out of the race and left Velez within three points of Newell's with one game to play. However, their relatively inexperienced side were held 1-1 at home by Arsenal, allowing the leaders the luxury of losing 2-0 away to Independiente and still taking the title.

Boca Juniors' dismal League showing – they finished eighth, 10 points behind Newell's – prompted them to concentrate on the Sudamericana Cup. This meant they fielded virtual reserve sides in their last few League games, which included a 3-1 home defeat by Newell's.

Arch-rivals River Plate claimed Boca wanted to lose to Newell's in order to harm River's title chances. They cited a pre-match interview with Boca keeper Roberto Abbondanzieri, the only first-teamer selected to play against Newell's, in which he was asked whether he thought Boca were going to win. His reply, "No", caused a furore. River coach Leo Astrada voiced his suspicions, to which Boca's Jorge Benitez replied: "If they [River] have to depend on other results, they are not a good team."

Afterwards, Abbondanzieri claimed it had all been a joke, adding that stupid questions deserved stupid answers.

Newell's did not have the monopoly on talented youngsters. Midfielders Marcelo Carrusca, 21, and Jose Sosa, 19, made a major contribution to Estudiantes' fourth-place finish, their best for years; Banfield forward Rodrigo Palacio, 22, earned a move to Boca on the strength of his outstanding displays; and 21-year-old Racing Club forward Lisandro Lopez was League top scorer with 12 goals.

Eric Weil

The Strongest show their power

BOLIVIA

BOLIVAR'S PROGRESS TO the Sudamericana Cup Final pushed the domestic closing championship on to the back burner, and their decision to field a youth team in several League games clearly devalued the competition.

Results included a 9-1 thrashing by Oriente Petrolero and a 7-0 defeat by La Paz rivals The Strongest in what should have been a prestigious derby meeting.

With Bolivar out of the running, the tournament developed into a two-horse race between The Strongest and Oriente, with the former eventually emerging victorious. The Strongest won 4-3 on penalties after each side had won one leg each and drawn the third of a play-off tie.

The winners' hero was teenage goalkeeper Mauricio Sahonero, who saved a penalty from veteran Erwin Sanchez after being thrown into the fray because first-choice Juan Marcelo Robledo was suspended. Robledo's ban followed complaints from several clubs over his nationality. The League discovered that he had registered as an Argentinian in 1998 but changed to being a Bolivian in 2001.

Spare a thought for Union Central, who are based in the town of Tarija, deep in southern Bolivia's 'Butch Cassidy' country. Unable to afford air fares, they were forced to travel to away games by bus and faced journeys of up to 24 hours over unpaved mountain roads for matches in La Paz.

Brian Homewood

SOUTH AMERICAN ROUND-UP

COLOMBIA

Atletico Nacional, who narrowly lost to city rivals Independiente Medellin in the opening championship Final, missed out on silverware once again when going down on penalties to Barranquilla's Atletico Junior in the closing campaign decider. Even more agonising for Nacional was the fact they had come within three minutes of taking the closing crown having overcome a first leg deficit of 3-0 to lead 5-4 on aggregate. However, Junior's Walter Ribonetto levelled the overall score in the 88th minute, and his side went on to beat Nacional 5-4 in the shoot-out. It was Junior's fourth title, with much of the credit due to Argentinian coach Miguel Angel Lopez and compatriot midfielder Omar Perez.

Rene Higuita, the former Colombia goalkeeper, has had his contract terminated by Ecuadorean club Aucas after failing a drugs test in November.

CHILE

Cobreloa, winners of the 2003 opening and closing championships, got back among the silverware by beating Union Espanola 3-1 on aggregate in the 2004 closing campaign

Heads we win...Pumas' Francisco Fonseca is mobbed after scoring the only goal of the opening Final's second leg

Pumas pounce on second straight title

MEXICO

PUMAS UNAM DEFEATED Monterrey in both legs of the opening championship Final to become the first club to win back-to-back titles since the start of the 'short league' system in 1996-97.

Monterrey took the lead in the first leg, at Pumas, through League stage top scorer Guillermo Franco. But the home side rallied to win 2-1 with second-half goals from Joaquin Beltran and David Toledo. Francisco Fonseca scored the only goal of the return to give Pumas a 3-1 aggregate win.

The Mexico City side, who beat Guadalajara in last year's closing championship Final, had made a dismal start to the defence of their crown, losing six out of their first eight games in the League stage of the opening campaign. However, they hit back to finish second in their group and qualify for the knockout stages. There they beat Veracruz 4-1 on aggregate and then Atlas 6-4 to reach the championship decider.

Monterrey, the 2003 closing champions, then lost to 2004 opening winners Pachuca in a play-off for a Libertadores Cup place, though they will join Pumas in this year's CONCACAF Champions Cup.

Carlos Ramirez

decider. The club, based in the mining town of Calama, have now won eight titles in all despite having only been founded in 1977.

PARAGUAY

Cerro Porteno added the closing championship to their opening campaign triumph to automatically win the overall championship crown. However, celebrations were dampened by the news that coach Gerardo Martino had resigned in order to spend more time with his family back in his native Argentina. Cerro Porteno's 2004 success was Martino's third consecutive overall championship, having taken the crown with Libertad in the two previous years. Olimpia, Paraguay's other big club and record title winners, finished bottom of the closing championship table, a crowd of only 530 watching their final game. The club, who won the overall championship four times in a row between 1997 and 2000, have been on the slide ever since the resignation of controversial president Osvaldo Dominguez Dibb.

ECUADOR

Deportivo Cuenca won the overall championship for the first time and in the process became only the second club from outside the major cities of Quito and Guayaquil to win the title in its 47-year history. Remarkably, Cuenca's Argentinian coach Julio Asad was in charge of Olmedo when they became the first provincial side to win the championship, in 2000.

Let's party...Atletico Junior of Barranquilla celebrate victory in Colombia's closing championship

VENEZUELA

Union Atletico Maracaibo won the 2004-05 opening championship by two points from 2003-04 overall champions Caracas, overtaking their rivals on the final day with a 2-1 win at Monagas.

Eric Weil

Eccentrics keep the Cup

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL

Local hero...Enyimba fans chair goalkeeper Dele Aiyenugba after the Champions League triumph

ENYIMBA OF NIGERIA became the first side to retain the African Champions Cup for 36 years when beating Tunisia's Etoile Sahel 5-3 on penalties after a 3-3 aggregate draw in the Final.

The achievement was all the more remarkable given their somewhat eccentric approach to the competition, with endless team rejigs often involving strikers being played in central defence or the use of a five-man forward line in other games. The club also opted to switch goalkeepers just before the penalty shoot-out in both the Final and semi-final, against Esperance of Tunisia, a move that proved inspired.

But perhaps the most unusual decision was to allow first-choice keeper Vincent Enyeama to take a penalty during normal time of the Final's second leg, in Abuja, when his team were trailing 2-1 from the opening game, away in Sousse. Yet Enyeama, who played for Nigeria at the last World Cup, looked a seasoned penalty-taker, converting to put his side level on aggregate before giving way to Dele Aiyenugba for him to repeat his shoot-out heroics of the semi-final.

The first leg of the Final was overshadowed by two controversial decisions from Algerian referee Mohamed Benouza. He allowed Emeka Nwanna's 15th-minute goal for Enyimba to stand when it looked patently offside, then made amends by handing Etoile a generous penalty just before the break. Imad Mhadhebi converted it, and Etoile went on to win through Ivorian Kandia Traore's header eight minutes after half-time.

The penalty decision in the return leg, which again came just before half-time, was also controversial. Benin referee Bonaventure Codjia claimed he saw Kais Zouaghi handle. Still, Enyeama scored with aplomb to make it 2-2 overall.

Benin striker Mouri Ogunbiyi put Enyimba into an aggregate lead in the 53rd minute, but they were pegged back 10 minutes later when Etoile captain Zoubeir Baya floated in a free-kick and Zouaghi caught Enyeama off his line with a looping header.

With no provision for extra-time in African club competitions, the Final went straight to penalties. The first three went in before substitute Aiyenugba flung himself to his left to turn away Sabeur Ben Frej's effort. The Nigerians kept hitting the target and fittingly, the deciding kick was converted by Obinna Nwaneri, one of the stars of their campaign.

So Enyimba completed the back-to-back feat only one club had achieved before – Zaire's TP Englebert in 1968. And thus they denied Etoile, the 2003 Cup-winners Cup winners, a dream ending to their first Champions League Final appearance.

Mark Gleeson

Hearts trump Kotoko

CONFEDERATION CUP FINAL

GHANA'S HEARTS OF OAK have had a slight edge in their bitter local rivalry with Asante Kotoko over the past decade and pressed home the point with their success in the Final of the inaugural African Confederation Cup in early January.

But like the African Champions League Final it took a penalty shoot-out to settle matters, Hearts winning 8-7 after a 2-2 aggregate draw.

The Final, postponed by a month because of the Ghanaian presidential elections, proved a tight affair from the kick-off.

Visitors Kotoko had the upper hand in the first leg and led 1-0 through Michael Osei after the otherwise excellent Hearts keeper Sani Mohamed spilt a free-kick from former Hearts player Charles Taylor. But Louis Agyemang popped up with an equaliser with virtually the last kick of the match.

Hearts proved the better side in the second leg, though Kotoko went 2-1 up on aggregate against the run of play from Taylor's superb goal in the 54th minute.

But Hearts got a deserved equaliser with 10 minutes to go, Lawrence Adjeh Tetteh heading home from a corner.

The shoot-out proved a tense affair and went to sudden death before Michael Donkor wrapped it up.

The Accra side's success comes four years after they won the 2000 Champions League, also under veteran coach Cecil Jones Attuquayefio, who left Hearts in between to work in Benin before returning last year.

Mark Gleeson

Danger signs...Obafemi Martins could miss out again

CAF's blind dates

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP

THE CONFEDERATION OF African Football has set itself up for a barrage of complaints from European club coaches after deciding to stage the next Nations Cup finals between January 20 and February 10, 2006. This is right in the middle of the European season, and since the majority of likely finals competitors now play in Europe it means another round of club v country battles.

The last Nations Cup finals were bereft of the likes of Nigeria's Obafemi Martins and South Africa's Benni McCarthy, who elected to put their clubs ahead of their country. And Jay-Jay Okocha, favourite to win the 2004 African Footballer of the Year award, appeared for Nigeria only after some heavy persuasion on his club, Bolton. CAF's latest decision means there is every likelihood several key players will again seek to skip the 2006 event in Egypt rather than risk antagonising their clubs.

If CAF were clever, it would stage the Nations Cup in June and July every odd year, when there is no World Cup or European Championship. By skipping a year and holding its next-but-one Nations Cup in mid-year in 2009, Africa would find a slot for itself in world football and increase tenfold its chances of a wider international profile and a more lucrative return.

But CAF president Issa Hayatou has already rejected the idea of rescheduling the finals. There is high-level resistance to the move because the CAF leadership don't want to be seen caving in to European club power. But if they want to do right by their own constituents, they must realise such a move is in the best interests of African football, even if their own egos take a bit of a beating.

Mark Gleeson

ROUND-UP

CENTRAL AFRICA

Daring Club Motema Pembe were crowned champions in the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO after finishing three points clear of TP Mazembe Englebert. However, coach Louis Watunda departed soon afterwards, describing the club's management as amateurish. It was DC Motema Pembe's 10th national title, but their first since 1999.

SC Cilu won the CONGOLESE Cup for the second year running after beating Saint Luc Kananga 1-0 in the Final.

EAST AFRICA

ETHIOPIA won the annual East and Central African Senior Challenge Cup on home soil, beating surprise package Burundi 3-0 in the Final in Addis Abeba.

NORTH AFRICA

Former EGYPT international Hassan Shehata has been named as the country's new coach. He succeeds Marco Tardelli, who was fired after the World Cup defeat by Libya in October.

CS Sfaxien beat Esperance 2-0 after extra-time in the TUNISIAN Cup Final. Portuguese coach Luis Miguel has taken the reins at Stade Tunisien.

French coach Alain Fiard has been fired by MOROCCAN champions Raja Casablanca after the team fell seven points behind city arch-rivals Wydad with nine matches played. Former Mali coach Henri Stambouli has taken over.

Al Hilal retained the SUDANESE League after beating closest challengers Al Merreikh 2-1 in the final game of the season.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

CAPS United won the League in ZIMBABWE for the first time since 1996 and with three games to spare. The Harare club's 5-1 win away to Kwekwe Cables gave them an unassailable 13-point lead.

Portuguese coach Jose Alberto Torres has signed a two-year contract with ANGOLA'S Petro Huambo.

Kitwe United, one of ZAMBIA'S oldest clubs, ended a 33-year silverware drought when beating Zanaco 1-0 in the Top Eight Cup Final. Joseph Bwalya scored two minutes after half-time.

In SOUTH AFRICA, Santos defender Jeremy Jansen has been jailed for eight years after being found guilty of the rape and assault of a former girlfriend. The 25-year-old previously played with Ajax Cape Town. Kaizer Chiefs beat SuperSport United 1-0 in the League Cup Final, with Zambian international Collins Mbesuma scoring the winner.

Talking tactics...Stambouli has swapped Mali for Raja Casablanca

WEST AFRICA

Ratomir Dujkovic has taken the reins as GHANA'S national coach on a two-year contract. The Serb, who succeeds Portuguese Mariano Barreto, steered Rwanda to their first Nations Cup finals tournament last year. Former Ghana captain and coach Edward Aggrey-Fynn died in November. He was the team's first captain after independence.

Mogas '90 won the Cup in BENIN, beating Requins Atlantique 1-0 in the Final.

Mark Gleeson

Karimi crowned

IRAN'S DOMINANCE OF the Asian Player of the Year award continued as Ali Karimi claimed the 2004 title ahead of Japan's Shunsuke Nakamura and A'ala Hubail of Bahrain.

Karimi, one of the stars of last year's Asian Cup, is the fourth Iranian to win the honour, following Khodadad Azizi (1996), Ali Daei (1999) and Mehdi Mahdavikia (2003). Only Japanese players have a comparable record, having also won four titles in the award's 10-year history.

"This was not an easy award to win," said Karimi, who plays for Al Ahli in the United Arab Emirates. "I worked hard to get it and I want to say thanks to my family."

Speculation in the Japanese media, however, suggested Karimi had won only after Nakamura, named the Asian Cup's most valuable player after inspiring Japan to win the tournament, had been unable to travel to the Asian Football Confederation's headquarters in Kuala Lumpur to collect the award.

Karimi's success is a significant turnaround for a player who was banned for a year by the confederation in 1999 for attacking an official during a tournament in Vietnam. He was joint-highest scorer at the Asian Cup with Hubail as Iran finished third.

Karimi will now lead Iran's attempt to reach the 2006 World Cup when qualifying resumes in February. The Iranians have been drawn in the tougher of the two final Asian qualifying groups, with Japan, Bahrain and North Korea. The other group features South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Uzbekistan. The top two from each group go into the finals, with the third-placed sides meeting for the right to a play-off against a CONCACAF side.

Michael Church

Star man...Ali Karimi collects the Asian Player of the Year award

Lee save hands win to Suwon

SOUTH KOREA

FORMER ASIAN CHAMPIONS Suwon Bluewings won the domestic title for the first time since 1999 after defeating Pohang Steelers on penalties following a 0-0 aggregate draw.

Suwon, the season's Second Stage winners, claimed the title when international keeper Lee Woon-jae denied Pohang's Joaquin in the shoot-out to give his side a 4-3 win. Pohang had won the First Stage to earn their place in the title decider.

It was the first title as a coach for South Korean playing legend Cha Bum-kun, who took the reins at Suwon after being banned from working in Korea following his humiliating sacking as national team boss during the 1998 World Cup.

Suwon have already started building for their Asian Champions League campaign, signing Song Chong-gug from Feyenoord after he fell out of favour with Ruud Gullit.

Suwon, Asian champions in 2001 and 2002, have been drawn to face China's Shenzhen Jianlibao, Hoang Anh Gia Lai of Vietnam and Japan's Jubilo Iwata in this year's tournament.

They are joined in the Champions League by Busan I.cons after their penalty shoot-out victory over Bucheon in the Korean Cup Final.

International defender Kim Tae-young has announced his retirement from the game. He won 101 caps during his South Korea career.

Michael Church

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ROUND-UP

ASIA

SAUDI ARABIAN international Saad Al-Dossary was killed in a car crash shortly after returning to the kingdom following his participation in the Gulf Cup.

Shandong Luneng beat Sichuan Guancheng 2-1 in the CHINESE FA Cup Final. Dalian Shide have appointed ex-Serbia & Montenegro Under-23 coach Vladimir Petrovic Pizon. He replaces player-coach Hao Haidong, now at Sheffield United.

Israeli-Arab coach Azmi Nassar has signed a two-year deal to take charge of PALESTINE. He replaces Austrian Alfred Riedl.

IRANIAN champions Pas have appointed former Turkey coach Mustafa Denizli. He replaces Majid Jalali, fired after a run of poor results.

Al Ain won the UAE FA Cup for the first time with an 11-10 penalties win over Al Ahli after a 1-1 draw.

In HONG KONG, Sun Hei beat Happy Valley 1-0 to win their third League Cup in a row.

Muharraq beat Busaiteen 2-1 in the BAHRAIN FA Cup Final.

Perlis won the MALAYSIAN Cup, beating Kedah 1-0 in the Final.

Michael Church & Azam Mahmood

OCEANIA

NEW ZEALAND'S Auckland Kingz, who will play in Australia's new Hyundai A League, have appointed former national team boss John Adshead. He led New Zealand to their only World Cup appearance, in 1982.

In AUSTRALIA, Melbourne Victory named Scotsman Ernie Merrick as coach, with compatriot Lawrie McKinna taking the reins at Central Coast Mariners.

Taunaimato Breeze beat Central United 3-2 in SAMOA'S Champion of Champions Grand Final.

Nikao Sokattack clinched the COOK ISLANDS' League title with a draw against Avatiu on the final day. Previous champions Tupapa gained some revenge when defeating Nikao in the Cup Final.

Paul Moon

Eyes on the prize...the Qatar players take hold of the Gulf Cup trophy after beating Oman on penalties in the Final

Qatar: hosts with the most

GULF CUP

QATAR CLAIMED THE Gulf Cup title for the second time, on home soil, by defeating Oman 5-4 on penalties in the Final following a 1-1 draw. A missed spot-kick by Imad Ali as the shoot-out entered sudden death cost the Omanis, who were in the Final for the first time. Qatar had taken the lead in the game after four minutes through Wesam Rizik, with Bader Al-Maymani equalising midway through the half.

The Final, played at the Al Sadd stadium in Doha, proved to be the last match in charge for Oman coach Milan Macala. The Czech, credited with the rise of the tiny Gulf nation to the top of the Asian game, stood down in order to take the reins at United Arab Emirates side Al Ain, the former Asian club champions. Under Macala, Oman qualified for their first Asian Cup finals and pushed eventual group winners Japan all the way in the opening phase of Asia's 2006 World Cup qualifying tournament.

Macala, who won the Gulf Cup in 1996 and 1998 with Kuwait, took charge of Oman in 2003 having previously led them during the 2002 World Cup qualifiers.

Iraq coach Adnan Hamd also quit after his side finished bottom of their group. Meanwhile, Kuwait's Mohammed Ibrahim has been replaced by Slobodan Pavkovic after the side lost the third-place play-off against Bahrain.

Michael Church

Marinos keep tight ship to retain title

JAPAN

YOKOHAMA F MARINOS retained the J.League championship after beating Urawa Reds on penalties in the title-deciding play-off. The teams, First and Second Stage winners respectively, both won their home leg 1-0 to force the shoot-out, which Marinos won 4-2.

The Yokohama side put in polished performances in both legs, with their defence of Yuji Nakazawa, Naoki Matsuda and Ryuji Kawai providing a formidable barrier to the in-form Reds. However, the absence through injury of strikers Tatsuhiko Kubo and Ahn Jung-hwan, plus midfielders Yoo Sang-chul and Akihiro Endo, meant they lacked a cutting edge.

Not surprisingly, therefore, it was defender Kawai who gave Marinos the first leg victory, scoring his first ever J.League goal with a near-post header in the 66th minute.

That game was watched by an all-time League record gate of 64,899, with 59,715 showing up for the return at the Saitama stadium. There, Marinos held on confidently to their aggregate lead despite fierce Reds pressure until 15 minutes from the end of normal time, when Eisuke Nakanishi was sent off for bringing down Emerson. Alex scored from the resulting free-kick to take the tie into extra-time. Again, Marinos defended stoutly and received a major boost ahead of the penalties when Emerson, the likely first taker for Reds in the shoot-out, was himself sent off for violent play.

Nakazawa, the player of the Final, was also named J.League Player of the Season two days later. Takayuki Morimoto, Tokyo Verdy's 16-year-old striker, took the Young Player of the Year award.

Mike Plastow & Yumiko Nagae

Jumping for joy...Marinos' party begins

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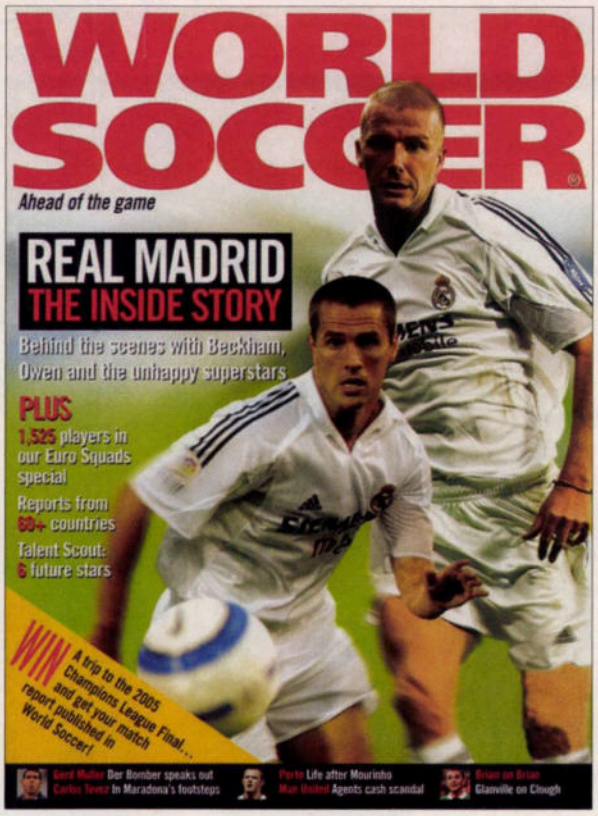

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45G

Number one problem

When it comes to goalkeepers, why are so many of England's top teams prepared to accept second best, asks Howard Johnson

BY THE TIME the nation's workforce were at their desks the morning after the Man United-Spurs game, an e-mail with an attached image, shown left, had already plopped into many of their inboxes. The one-liner that accompanied the image was: "Ah well, that explains it."

The biggest joke of all, though, bigger than the fact that that Spurs goal was not given, is that Alex Ferguson can't seem to put a decent keeper between the sticks. Since the undeniably magnificent Peter Schmeichel left United in 1999, Fergie has used eight keepers, all figuring on the scale between 'erratic' and 'nightmare' – Mark Bosnich, Massimo Taibi, Fabien Barthez, Andy Goram, Ricardo, Raimond Van der Gouw, Tim Howard and Roy Carroll, whose fumbled catch against Spurs led to the goal that never was.

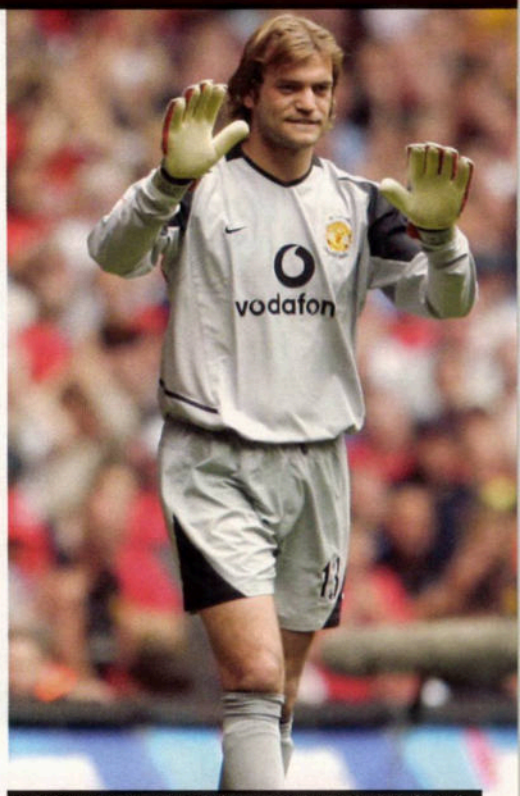
But it's not only United, of England's leading clubs, who are afflicted by Grotty Goalkeeper's Disease. At Arsenal, Arsene Wenger seems unable to make up his mind about Jens Lehmann and Manuel Almunia (neither is up to the task), and Liverpool's Rafa Benitez has been flip-flopping between the erratic Jerzy Dudek and the enigmatic and injury-prone Chris Kirkland. Only Chelsea can claim to have a world-class keeper. In fact, they could argue with some justification that they have two.

So why does this goalkeeping blind spot exist? Can it be that there simply aren't any great keepers around at the moment? Jose Mourinho wouldn't agree with that. When Petr Cech took Roman Abramovich's dollar last year it wasn't as if he was football's best-kept secret. Real Madrid and Internazionale had both shown an interest in the Czech Republic No 1 before Chelsea made their move. But at no point were United and Arsenal mentioned as possible suitors. Presumably they were happy with a former Wigan player and a second-choice German international respectively.

And while Ferguson and Wenger have been steadfast in their public support of all their keepers, their decisions to change horses in midstream this season suggest they accept all is not well. Have a look at what's going on at Stamford Bridge. In a team where rotation is still de rigueur, Cech has been a virtually permanent fixture.

What Carlo Cudicini must make of all this heaven only knows. Considered the best keeper in the Premier League less than two years ago, the Italian has been forced to warm the bench at Chelsea all season as the keepers at other top clubs have dropped clanger after clanger. The gulf in class is immense between Mourinho's second choice and all of the keepers currently fighting it out for the No 1 spot at Arsenal, United and Liverpool. Wenger and Ferguson are both reportedly admirers of Cudicini, but talk of the player joining either club seems unfounded.

'Ferguson and Wenger seem happy to fiddle while Rome burns'



No improvement...Man Utd's Howard is replaced by Carroll

Fans know best

Arsenal, United and Liverpool can kid themselves all they like that they've got their keeper problems under control. But if the managers were to earwig conversations in the pubs next door to their grounds they'd hear a different story. And it's not only Cudicini who knows the keeping drill. There are plenty of top-drawer keepers out there – Parma's Sebastien Frey, Juve's Gianluigi Buffon, Valencia's Santiago Canizares, Milan's Dida, Madrid's Iker Casillas...

IT'S ALL GONE WRONG FOR...

ROBBIE SAVAGE

At the start of the season Robbie Savage was bona fide royalty down St Andrews way. His all-action style and utter indifference to the displeasure he caused opposition supporters had turned him into a Birmingham City idol. Then he decided he needed to move. To Blackburn to be precise. To be nearer his folks in Wrexham, who, he said, were going through some tough times. Because he'd been offered a load more money, more like, intimated Birmingham owner David Sullivan. The road map seemed to back Sullivan's claims. Birmingham, it transpires, is actually two miles closer to Wrexham than Blackburn.

Mileage or money?...Savage

Transformer...Jol

You might argue that it would take a small fortune to land one of that lot. But we were under the impression that the Premiership was the best league in the world. And, more importantly, the richest. Don't they say that money talks?

If United, Arsenal and Liverpool are serious in their stated intentions to rule, first at home, then in Europe, then isn't this exactly the kind of quality they need to attract to their clubs to make us truly believe in their aspirations to greatness?

For the time being, though, it seems all three are happy to soldier on with their B-listers, despite the overwhelming evidence that, as the phrase goes, 'something must be done'. Weird as it is, Ferguson, Benitez and Wenger seem happy to fiddle while Rome burns. The trouble is, they could very well be sitting there watching their title hopes go up in flames too.

MEDIA WATCH

Video replays

"If a game is televised, the cameras must be used to give assistance. At every game in every major league in the world there are at least a dozen lenses giving more angles than an Arthur Daley deal in a second-hand car showroom."
Jonathan Pearce leaves no one in any doubt where he stands in the great football technology debate in the *Sunday Mirror*

"With efficient communication between an extra official following play on a screen and the referee on the field, over-the-line decisions and offside rulings could in most instances be easily handled. But where the issue of intent arose…the pictures would rarely be conclusive. Worries about such ambiguities are more valid than complaints about the time consumed by video replays."
In the *Sunday Times*, Hugh McIlvanney sees some potential problems

"Instead of the imposition of fourth officials ensuring coaches don't set foot outside a little white box, shouldn't they have looked at the possibilities of a net judge stationed alongside a goalpost? They do something like that in rugby, which also turned to video replays of questionable tries – a process which extracts a decision from a pile of steaming bodies and therefore takes far longer than any football goal would. No argument from rugger people either, because they realise that in no way is the referee's authority undermined."
Birmingham City managing director Karren Brady looks to another sport for inspiration in *The Sun*

"I do not like the use of video to change the game. I think it should just be used for disciplinary problems. If all the players did the right things, then there would be no need for referees. But it doesn't work like that."
Liverpool boss Rafa Benitez speaking to the city's *Daily Post*

"In matters like whether the ball has crossed the line I believe technology should be introduced – and I think this is an opinion shared by most referees. What happened on Tuesday night was freakish and unavoidable. My job was to watch for offside so I was standing in line with the last defender. I take pride in being able to cover short distances quickly but I was still 25 yards from goal by the time the ball came down – and from there it was impossible to judge whether it had crossed the line. You can't guess these things – you have to be 100 per cent certain. I'm disappointed but, apart from running faster than Linford Christie, there's nothing I could have done differently."
The man in the eye of the Old Trafford storm, assistant referee Rob Lewis, backs technology – but backs himself harder in the *Daily Mail*

"I was reading about the coach at Bologna who was suggesting videos on the side of the pitch and that if the referee couldn't make up his mind within 30 seconds – which is the time it takes to take a throw-in – the referee should play on. That isn't a bad idea, because what you don't want is people sat in the stands freezing. I think that's the deterrent to video evidence, but progress is progress and I have come round to the idea."
Alex Ferguson adds even more topspin to the debate in the *Independent*

"Allowing such a free-flowing spectacle as football to descend into a stop-start contest run by opportunistic appeal-makers and camera-wielding law-enforcers would be ruinous. Viewers would switch off. Fans' minds would numb. Players' muscles would stiffen. Technology-loving managers like Bolton Wanderers' Sam Allardyce appear to have a mantra that The Show Must Not Go On (Until All Angles Of Every Incident Have Been Reviewed Satisfactorily). But it's just not cricket. Football is not a sport where natural breaks occur. Where Allardyce and those who rail against the Luddite traditionalists do have a case is in exploiting technological advancements to establish matters of fact, such as when the ball crossed the line."
The *Daily Telegraph's* Henry Winter favours only limited use of technology

IT'S ALL GONE RIGHT FOR...

MARTIN JOL

He looks like a boxer who's taken more hits than he's dished out. But what does Martin Jol care? The Dutchman picked up the famous poisoned chalice at Spurs when Frenchman Jacques Santini beat a hasty retreat earlier in the season, swigged the lot down like it was nothing worse than fizzy pop, burped and immediately started sorting out north London's perennial under-achievers. Jol has transformed Spurs from a disorganised rabble into a side oozing confidence, showing resolve and posting wins on the results board like there's no tomorrow. With 22 League games gone they had risen to seventh place – and would have been sixth if only *that* goal had stood against Manchester United…

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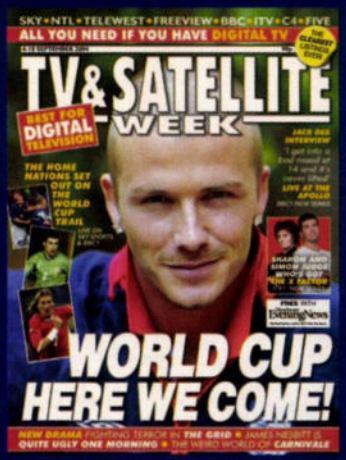

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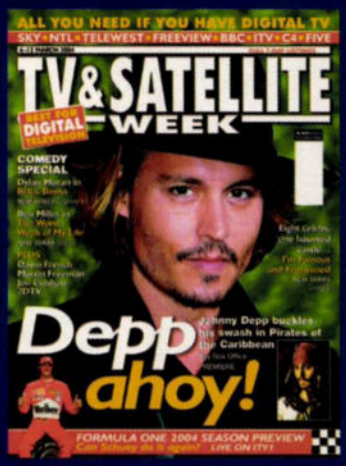

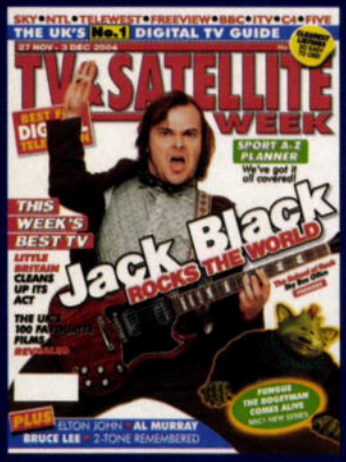

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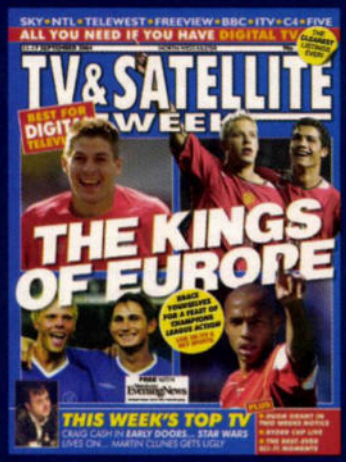

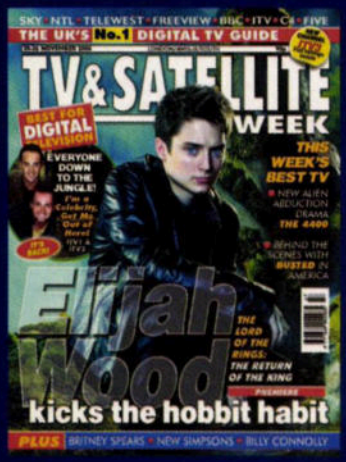

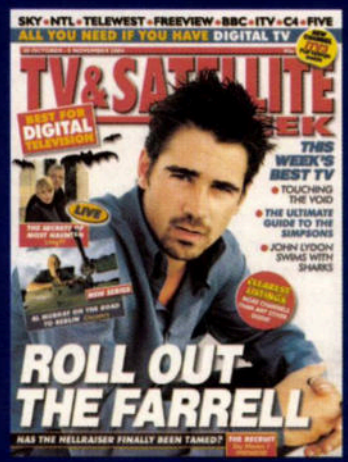

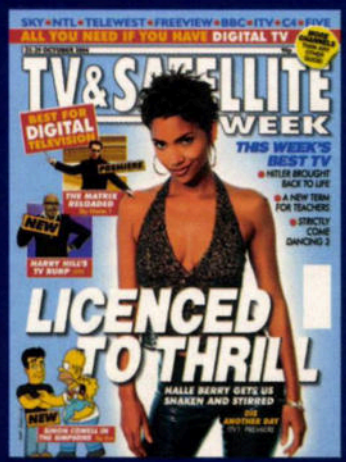

TALENT SCOUT

TOMORROW'S STARS TODAY

Paolo GUERRERO

Life is sweet for Bayern's new find

EVERY TIME Bayern Munich's 21-year-old Peruvian hotshot Paolo Guerrero scores, he receives a bar of chocolate from Gerd Muller, the reserve team's assistant coach. With the youngster regularly on target for the Bavarians' second string and exploding on to the Bundesliga scene this season with five goals in his first six games, Muller must be considering buying his confectionery wholesale.

"Paolo is definitely shaping up to be a tremendous finisher," says Muller, the legendary Germany marksman. "He can shoot equally well with either foot, his heading is good and he has that intuition to be in the right place at the right time."

What makes the youngster's recent achievements even more noteworthy is that all his Bundesliga goals have been scored as a substitute. On the pitch for a total of just 172 minutes this season, he has averaged a goal every 34 minutes – no other German has ever reached the five-goal mark so quickly.

"For efficiency, he can't be beaten," says Bayern first-team coach Felix Magath, not normally one to dole out high praise. "He's been the discovery of the season. He's a clever, instinctive goalscorer, a street footballer who is always looking for chances."

Unusually, Guerrero's full international debut came before he had played a top-flight League game. He did not particularly shine during the 1-0 World Cup qualifying defeat by Bolivia in La Paz last October, but was far more impressive in his second outing, coming off the bench to score a party-piece late winner at home to Chile.

Guerrero's prowess should come as no surprise. His half-brother was a Peruvian international, while his uncle played for River Plate and Boca Juniors in Argentina. Lima-born Guerrero was just seven when he won a place at the soccer school of one of the city's top clubs, Alianza. He scored over 200 goals for the youth team and in spring 2002 caught the eye of Bayern chief scout Wolfgang Dremmler.

Bayern could not believe their good fortune. Not only had they unearthed a raw diamond but also had to pay only £200,000 for the teenager since contracts for Under-21 players are forbidden in Peru.

Guerrero, highly confident and feisty, made the switch to Bavaria without batting an eyelid. He soon established himself in Bayern's amateur side and this season has scored four times to help them reach the German Cup quarter-finals.

"Whether I'm in the regional league or the Bundesliga, I go into every game convinced I'll score," says Guerrero. "I'm happy to be Bayern's supersub. But naturally I'm hoping to hold down a regular place in the second half of the season. My other dream is to play for Bayern amateurs against our first team in the Cup Final and score the winner. Our stars will get over it. They'll win the Bundesliga."

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club	Bayern Munich (Ger)
Country	Peru
Born	January 1, 1984, in Lima
Previous club	Alianza Lima
International debut	October 2004, v Bolivia
International caps	2 (1 gl)

Jesus NAVAS

Latest wonder product from Sevilla's lab

SEVILLA COACH Joaquin Caparros calls it the pharmacy. Others call it a miracle. Either way, the Sevilla youth system has a habit of finding the right chemistry – or perhaps it is alchemy.

The most famous recent product is Jose Antonio Reyes, whose move to Arsenal last season brought anguish to the local faithful. Yet few are complaining now thanks to the emergence at the Andalucian club of Reyes' best friend, Jesus Navas. While Arsenal and Real Madrid are already eyeing up the fast, skilful little winger, Caparros is in the mood to make an even more determined stand not to let another exceptional young talent get away. "We have to make it so that selling our best players is the exception rather than the rule," he says.

With that in mind, Sevilla are talking contract renewal and, fortunately for them, Navas wants to stay. The 19-year-old, already a regular in Spain's Under-21 team, has won a first-team place ahead of summer signing Fernando Sales and his form has helped the club climb to the Champions League spots.

Yet the youngster shuns the limelight. Navas insists that it embarrasses him to be recognised in the street, saying "I'm not interested in fame", and unusually for a wealthy young footballer doesn't even drive, let alone own a flash car. Nor has he ever been drunk, and instead spends his free time studying. "I'm lucky to be able to do what I most love doing – playing football," he says. "Everything else doesn't interest me."

Textbooks apart, he admits that the last thing he read was Ronaldo's autobiography. But it is Reyes who was his idol, as well as his friend, and Navas is doing an admirable job of replacing him. Like it or not, that brings fame. Navas is going to have to get used to it – he is going to be a star.

National coach Luis Aragones says he is destined to be "one of the biggest footballers in Spain". Meanwhile, Pablo Blanco, the ex-player in charge of Sevilla's youth system and a man who knows a thing or two about talent, says: "Navas's football is the very embodiment of exquisite finery. He has enormous ability and great variety. Some talk about him having a physical weakness, but that just makes him even more of a footballer, in pure form – like Pablo Aimar or Johan Cruyff.

"He has great mental strength and pace, talent and bravery to go at people again and again. He will triumph."

One reason for that, says Blanco, is that at Sevilla success breeds ever-greater confidence in their youth products and, as a result, they are always given a chance. "[Sporting director] Ramon Monchi and Caparros really believe in the youth team and have given them enormous confidence," says Blanco.

But confidence is nothing without talent – and Navas has it in abundance. "Every year more players make first-team debuts for one simple reason," says Caparros. "I like to bet on a winning horse. And anyone would bet on Jesus Navas."

Sid Lowe

FACT FILE

Club Sevilla
Country Spain
Born November 21, 1985, in Seville

Tomas JUN

FACT FILE

Club Sparta Prague
Country Czech Republic
Born November 17, 1983, in Prague
Previous clubs TJ Jiskra Hlubocepy, Sparta Prague, FK Jablonec (loan)
International debut November 2004, v Macedonia
International caps 1 (0 gls)
Honours Czech League 2000, 2001, 2003; Czech Cup 2004

Young striker taking the Czech League by storm

HIGH-PROFILE Czech Republic attackers Milan Baros, Jan Koller and Marek Heinz would be well advised to watch out for Sparta Prague front-runner Tomas Jun, who is threatening to supplant one of them in the national team.

National coach Karel Bruckner certainly appears to agree that the 21-year-old, 10-goal top domestic League scorer of the autumn, is the coming man. When Baros was forced to pull out of the October World Cup qualifier in Armenia, Bruckner had no qualms about calling up the Sparta front-man as cover.

Though 'Junko' did not play in that particular game, he did make his international bow the following month, coming on as a second-half substitute as the Czechs picked up three World Cup points from a 2-0 victory in Macedonia.

"For me it's only a question of time before Tomas makes the definitive international breakthrough," says Bruckner. "I've been closely watching his performances for various young Czech teams over the years, and every time I've seen him I've been most impressed. He has great footballing ability and a wonderful career ahead of him. He has that killer instinct in the box that all great strikers share."

Frantisek Straka is equally sure of Jun's class, commenting just before his recent dismissal as Sparta coach: "He's made great progress lately. He's developed into an essential player for us and certainly has not looked out of place in the Champions League. With his dynamic play, physical strength and fierce shooting, he's a great weapon to have."

Jun is a pure Sparta product. He has supported his hometown club for as long as he can remember and was thrilled when admitted to the Sparta football academy at the age of nine. Within seven years he found himself in the first team, making his professional debut in October 1999 in a League game with Hradec Kralove. It proved his only first-team appearance in 1999-2000 but there would be ample compensation on the international front that season, his seven goals helping the Czech Under-16 side to runners-up spot in the European Championship.

Jun, handled with care by successive Sparta coaches, made only sporadic first-team appearances over the next season and a half and also spent some time in 2002 honing his craft on loan at First Division FK Jablonec. However, he was given a number of run-outs at the point of Sparta's attack during the 2002-03 campaign, performing well enough to earn caps at Under-20 and Under-21 levels.

These days, Jun and fellow Sparta striker Milan Pacanda form the most lethal partnership in the country. But for how much longer? Pacanda has admirers in Germany, while a gaggle of scouts from the Premiership and Serie A are watching every move Jun makes.

"I'm ambitious and hope to play abroad one day in an important championship," says Jun. "Playing in the Champions League has given me a taste of that world. I'll never forget being on the pitch at Old Trafford and the San Siro, where I scored last season. But the time has to be right for any move. For the moment, my priority is Sparta."

Nick Bidwell

Manuel FERNANDES

Midfield spark making his mark at Benfica

WHEN BENFICA COACH Giovanni Trapattoni was asked at a pre-season press conference how he planned to use young Manuel Fernandes, he declared the midfielder had talent, but needed time to develop and would be eased slowly into the action.

However, it didn't take long for the Italian to change his mind. Fernandes was included in the starting line-up for Benfica's opening match, away to Beira Mar, and after a stellar performance in the 3-2 win there was little doubt he would be a key figure from then on.

Born into a poor family in the outskirts of Lisbon, Fernandes was quickly forced to adapt to life on the streets of some of the capital's roughest neighbourhoods. The experiences gained off the field not surprisingly gave the youngster a combativeness and spirit on it. The combination of those characteristics with his superior technical ability explains why previous Benfica coach Jose Antonio Camacho gave Fernandes his League debut at just 17.

Although the teenager can be used as an attacking midfielder, he is at his best in a holding role. Fernandes' relentless pursuit of the ball and the simple way in which he uses it has already made him indispensable to Benfica's midfield operations. If he can add a scoring touch to his game, the chances are he could soon be one of the most complete midfielders in Europe. No wonder he is already attracting the interest of some of the continent's biggest clubs.

But for now Benfica is the top priority. There is much to be done at the club, who have not won the League since 1994. If that long drought does come to an end, no doubt Fernandes will have had much to do with it.

Pedro Pinto

FACT FILE

Club Benfica
Country Portugal
Born February 5, 1986, in Lisbon

Stathis TAVLARIDIS

Happy days in Lille for Arsenal's Greek reject

STATHIS TAVLARIDIS may have failed to make the grade during a two-and-a-half-season spell at Arsenal but he has been anything but a disappointment since taking the Eurostar to Lille a year ago. The northern French side were hovering just above the relegation zone when Tavlaridis arrived on a six-month loan deal mid-way through last season. But the presence of the former Greek Under-21 international would soon change all that. Prior to his signing, the Lille defence was conceding an average 1.25 goals per game; that fell to a little over 0.50 goals after he joined. Relegation? Not on Tavlaridis' watch.

The Greek's Olympian displays had a number of French top-flight clubs beating a path to his door. But even though Lille had no option to buy him from Arsenal, they held the trump card – a pre-contract with the player. Now tied to a four-year deal, Tavlaridis has again been outstanding this season, helping the 'Lillois' to second place in the League.

"Stathis' most important asset is his tenacity," says Lille assistant coach Laurent Roussey. "He's so combative, determined and extremely difficult to shake off. He's impressive on the ground and in the air. He also acts as a leader on the pitch. He's very influential."

It is hard to believe this is the same player who barely made a ripple at Arsenal following a £600,000 move from Iraklis Salonika in September 2001. Tavlaridis made just one League start, in May 2003. "At Arsenal, I was with one of the best clubs in the world," he says. "I was in the same squad as a huge number of big names and living in a great city. But I'm far happier playing at Lille."

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club Lille (Fra)
Country Greece
Born January 25, 1980, in Salonika
Previous clubs Elpida Provata, Iraklis Salonika, Arsenal (Eng), Portsmouth (Eng, loan)

DREAM DOZEN

Tim Vickery selects 12 rising stars from last year's Brazilian national championship

JADSON

Born 05.10.83 Club Atletico Paranaense

Slightly-built playmaker who was the brains behind the runners-up's attack. Weighed in with 15 goals and set up plenty more, especially with delightful surprise passes in and around the area that wrong-footed the entire opposing defence. His partnership with top scorer Washington was the highlight of the season.

JO

Born 23.03.87 Club Corinthians

Lanky, left-footed striker who made his debut at just 16. Wonderful prospect who can chase the pass played behind the defensive line or hold the ball up, link the play and thread through passes. Finishes well, too. But now faces being squeezed out by Corinthians' big-money signings.

Shooting star...Rafael Sobis

RAFAEL SOBIS

Born 17.06.85 Club Internacional

Another promising striker from the club that recently produced Nilmar and Daniel Carvalho. Quick, with a low centre of gravity and the capacity to place his shots or blast them in, and off either foot.

CHIQUINHO

Born 20.06.83 Club Internacional

Left-back or wing-back who made a triumphant return after spending a year out with a worrying brain problem. Not the greatest defender in the world, but unlike many in his position is more of an artist than an athlete, with his mazy dribbling in tight spaces and his superb curling left-footed crosses.

Head lad...Fernandinho

FERNANDINHO

Born 04.05.85 Club Atletico Paranaense

Used as a right wing-back, but betrays his origins as a midfielder by constantly cutting inside. A splendidly fluent runner with the ball and an aerial threat up front – his header won Brazil the 2003 World Youth Cup.

LEONARDO

Born 19.03.86 Club Santos

Scored the goal that won the last Under-17 World Championship, and now has a domestic title medal after making the breakthrough into Santos' senior side. Lithe centre-back, quick and composed – perhaps another Aldair in the making.

RENAN

Born 29.03.85 Club Sao Paulo

Central midfielder who, without doing anything extraordinary, played a key role in his side's strong finish. Protects his defence well but does his best work in possession, knitting the side together with the speed and good sense of his pass-and-move game.

Diego LUGANO

Born 02.11.80 Club Sao Paulo

Sturdy, no-nonsense Uruguayan centre-back who had a solid campaign in the middle of Sao Paulo's back three. His sound positioning and aerial strength did much to ensure that his side had the best defensive record in the championship and earned him an international call-up.

ZE RODOLPHO

Born 15.05.84 Club Juventude

Seemed to run out of steam before the end, but even so he can look back on an excellent first season with one of the surprise teams. A highly-talented left-sided midfielder, well balanced with neat passing skills.

MIRANDA

Born 07.09.84 Club Coritiba

Rugged centre-back who was thrown in at the deep end in both the Libertadores Cup and then the Brazilian championship and came through in fine style. Tall but fairly fleet-footed, he takes much of the credit for his side having the third best defensive record in Brazil.

IBSON

Born 07.11.83 Club Flamengo

Thrusting midfielder whose strong end to the championship did much to save his side from relegation. Continually runs beyond opposing midfielders to cause problems in the final third. Is starting to show signs of continuing his runs into the box to shoot on goal.

RODRIGO TABATA

Born 19.11.80 Club Goias

All-action midfielder who, after spending years wandering around in the lower divisions, had a terrific first season in the top flight with Goias. Made up for lost time with great dynamism and a rocket shot.

Defensive strength...Diego Lugano

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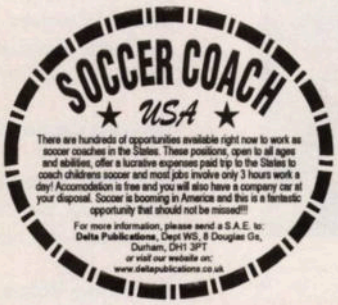

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	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Togo	5	3	1	1	6	2	10
Zambia	5	3	1	1	6	4	10
Senegal	5	3	1	1	9	5	10
Congo	5	2	0	3	6	7	6
Liberia	5	1	1	3	1	7	4
Mali	5	0	2	3	3	6	2

05.06.04 Senegal-Congo 2-0
05.06.04 Zambia-Togo 1-0
06.06.04 Liberia-Mali 1-0
19.06.04 Mali-Zambia 1-1
20.06.04 Congo-Liberia 3-0
20.06.04 Togo-Senegal 3-1
03.07.04 Senegal-Zambia 1-0
04.07.04 Congo-Mali 1-0
04.07.04 Liberia-Togo 0-0
04.09.04 Zambia-Liberia 1-0
05.09.04 Mali-Senegal 2-2
05.09.04 Togo-Congo 2-0
10.10.04 Congo-Zambia 2-3
10.10.04 Liberia-Senegal 0-3
10.10.04 Togo-Mali 1-0
25.03.05 Mali-Togo
25.03.05 Senegal-Liberia
25.03.05 Zambia-Congo
03.06.05 Congo-Senegal
03.06.05 Mali-Liberia
03.06.05 Togo-Zambia
17.06.05 Liberia-Congo
17.06.05 Senegal-Togo
17.06.05 Zambia-Mali
02.09.05 Mali-Congo
02.09.05 Togo-Liberia
02.09.05 Zambia-Senegal
07.10.05 Congo-Togo
07.10.05 Liberia-Zambia
07.10.05 Senegal-Mali

Group 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Africa	5	3	0	2	5	5	9
Ghana	5	2	2	1	6	2	8
DR Congo	5	2	2	1	5	4	8
Cape Verde Is	5	2	1	2	4	5	7
Burkina Faso	5	2	0	3	5	6	6
Uganda	5	1	1	3	2	5	4

05.06.04 Burkina Faso-Ghana 1-0
05.06.04 South Africa-Cape Verde Is 2-1
05.06.04 Uganda-DR Congo 1-0
19.06.04 Cape Verde Is-Uganda 1-0
20.06.04 DR Congo-Burkina Faso 3-2
20.06.04 Ghana-South Africa 3-0
03.07.04 Cape Verde Is-DR Congo 1-1
03.07.04 South Africa-Burkina Faso 2-0
03.07.04 Uganda-Ghana 1-1
04.09.04 Burkina Faso-Uganda 2-0
05.09.04 DR Congo-South Africa 1-0
05.09.04 Ghana-Cape Verde Is 2-0
09.10.04 Cape Verde Is-Burkina Faso 1-0
10.10.04 Ghana-DR Congo 0-0
10.10.04 Uganda-South Africa 0-1
25.03.05 Burkina Faso-Cape Verde Is
25.03.05 DR Congo-Ghana
25.03.05 South Africa-Uganda
03.06.05 Cape Verde Is-South Africa
03.06.05 DR Congo-Uganda
03.06.05 Ghana-Burkina Faso
17.06.05 Burkina Faso-DR Congo
17.06.05 South Africa-Ghana
17.06.05 Uganda-Cape Verde Is
02.09.05 Burkina Faso-South Africa
02.09.05 DR Congo-Cape Verde Is
02.09.05 Ghana-Uganda
07.10.05 Cape Verde Is-Ghana
07.10.05 South Africa-DR Congo
07.10.05 Uganda-Burkina Faso

Group 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ivory Coast	5	4	0	1	10	3	12
Libya	5	3	1	1	7	4	10
Cameroon	5	2	2	1	7	5	8
Egypt	5	2	1	2	11	9	7
Benin	5	0	2	3	6	11	2
Sudan	5	0	2	3	2	11	2

06.06.04 Cameroon-Benin 2-1
06.06.04 Ivory Coast-Libya 2-0
06.06.04 Sudan-Egypt 0-3
18.06.04 Libya-Cameroon 0-0
20.06.04 Benin-Sudan 1-1
20.06.04 Egypt-Ivory Coast 1-2
03.07.04 Sudan-Libya 0-1
04.07.04 Benin-Egypt 3-3
04.07.04 Cameroon-Ivory Coast 2-0
03.09.04 Libya-Benin 4-1
05.09.04 Egypt-Cameroon 3-2
05.09.04 Ivory Coast-Sudan 5-0
08.10.04 Libya-Egypt 2-1
09.10.04 Sudan-Cameroon 1-1
10.10.04 Benin-Ivory Coast 0-1
25.03.05 Cameroon-Sudan
25.03.05 Egypt-Libya
25.03.05 Ivory Coast-Benin
03.06.05 Benin-Cameroon
03.06.05 Egypt-Sudan
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17.06.05 Sudan-Benin
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02.09.05 Ivory Coast-Cameroon
02.09.05 Libya-Sudan
07.10.05 Benin-Libya
07.10.05 Cameroon-Egypt
07.10.05 Sudan-Ivory Coast

Group 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Angola	5	3	2	0	5	2	11
Nigeria	5	3	1	1	7	2	10
Gabon	5	1	3	1	8	7	6
Zimbabwe	5	1	2	2	4	6	5
Rwanda	5	1	1	3	4	7	4
Algeria	5	0	3	2	2	6	3

05.06.04 Algeria-Angola 0-0
05.06.04 Gabon-Zimbabwe 1-1
05.06.04 Nigeria-Rwanda 2-0
19.06.04 Rwanda-Gabon 3-1
20.06.04 Angola-Nigeria 1-0
20.06.04 Zimbabwe-Algeria 1-1
03.07.04 Gabon-Angola 2-2
03.07.04 Nigeria-Algeria 1-0
03.07.04 Rwanda-Zimbabwe 0-2
03.09.04 Zimbabwe-Nigeria 0-3
05.09.04 Algeria-Gabon 0-3
05.09.04 Angola-Rwanda 1-0
09.10.04 Gabon-Nigeria 1-1
09.10.04 Rwanda-Algeria 1-1
10.10.04 Angola-Zimbabwe 1-0
25.03.05 Algeria-Rwanda
25.03.05 Nigeria-Gabon
25.03.05 Zimbabwe-Angola
03.06.05 Angola-Algeria
03.06.05 Rwanda-Nigeria
03.06.05 Zimbabwe-Gabon
17.06.05 Algeria-Zimbabwe
17.06.05 Gabon-Rwanda
17.06.05 Nigeria-Angola
02.09.05 Algeria-Nigeria
02.09.05 Angola-Gabon
02.09.05 Zimbabwe-Rwanda
07.10.05 Gabon-Algeria
07.10.05 Nigeria-Zimbabwe
07.10.05 Rwanda-Angola

Group 5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guinea	5	2	2	1	9	5	8
Morocco	4	1	3	0	4	3	6
Botswana	5	2	0	3	5	10	6
Kenya	3	2	0	1	6	5	6
Tunisia	4	1	2	1	8	6	5
Malawi	5	0	3	2	6	9	3

05.06.04 Malawi-Morocco 1-1
05.06.04 Tunisia-Botswana 4-1
19.06.04 Botswana-Malawi 2-0
20.06.04 Guinea-Tunisia 2-1
03.07.04 Botswana-Morocco 0-1
03.07.04 Malawi-Guinea 1-1
04.09.04 Kenya-Malawi 3-2
04.09.04 Morocco-Tunisia 1-1
05.09.04 Guinea-Botswana 4-0
09.10.04 Botswana-Kenya 2-1
09.10.04 Malawi-Tunisia 2-2
10.10.04 Guinea-Morocco 1-1
17.11.04 Kenya-Guinea 2-1
09.02.05 Morocco-Kenya
25.03.05 Kenya-Botswana
25.03.05 Morocco-Guinea
25.03.05 Tunisia-Malawi
03.06.05 Morocco-Malawi
03.06.05 Botswana-Tunisia
03.06.05 Guinea-Kenya
11.06.05 Tunisia-Guinea
17.06.05 Kenya-Morocco
17.06.05 Malawi-Botswana
17.08.05 Tunisia-Kenya
02.09.05 Kenya-Tunisia
02.09.05 Morocco-Botswana
02.09.05 Guinea-Malawi
07.10.05 Malawi-Kenya
07.10.05 Tunisia-Morocco
07.10.05 Botswana-Guinea

Group winners qualify for finals

ASIA

4.5 finals berths

1st stage

Group 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iran	6	5	0	1	22	4	15
Jordan	6	4	0	2	10	6	12
Qatar	6	3	0	3	16	8	9
Laos	6	0	0	6	3	33	0

18.02.04 Iran-Qatar 3-1
18.02.04 Jordan-Laos 5-0
31.03.04 Jordan-Qatar 1-0
31.03.04 Laos-Iran 0-7
09.06.04 Iran-Jordan 0-1
09.06.04 Qatar-Laos 5-0
08.09.04 Jordan-Iran 0-2
08.09.04 Laos-Qatar 1-6
13.10.04 Laos-Jordan 2-3
13.10.04 Qatar-Iran 2-3
17.11.04 Iran-Laos 7-0
17.11.04 Qatar-Jordan 2-0

Group 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uzbekistan	6	5	1	0	16	3	16
Iraq	6	3	2	1	17	7	11
Palestine	6	2	1	3	11	11	7
Taiwan	6	0	0	6	3	26	0

18.02.04 Palestine-Taiwan 8-0
18.02.04 Uzbekistan-Iraq 1-1
31.03.04 Palestine-Iraq 1-1
31.03.04 Taiwan-Uzbekistan 0-1
09.06.04 Iraq-Taiwan 6-1
09.06.04 Uzbekistan-Palestine 3-0
08.09.04 Palestine-Uzbekistan 0-3
08.09.04 Taiwan-Iraq 1-4
13.10.04 Iraq-Uzbekistan 1-2
14.10.04 Taiwan-Palestine 0-1
16.11.04 Iraq-Palestine 4-1
17.11.04 Uzbekistan-Taiwan 6-1

Group 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Japan	6	6	0	0	16	1	18
Oman	6	3	1	2	14	3	10
India	6	1	1	4	2	18	4
Singapore	6	1	0	5	3	13	3

18.02.04 India-Singapore 1-0
18.02.04 Japan-Oman 1-0
31.03.04 India-Oman 1-5
31.03.04 Singapore-Japan 1-2
09.06.04 Japan-India 7-0
09.06.04 Oman-Singapore 7-0
08.09.04 India-Japan 0-4
08.09.04 Singapore-Oman 0-2
13.10.04 Oman-Japan 0-1
13.10.04 Singapore-India 2-0
17.11.04 Japan-Singapore 1-0
17.11.04 Oman-India 0-0

Group 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kuwait	6	5	0	1	15	2	15
China	6	5	0	1	14	1	15
Hong Kong	6	2	0	4	5	15	6
Malaysia	6	0	0	6	2	18	0

18.02.04 China-Kuwait 1-0
18.02.04 Malaysia-Hong Kong 1-3
31.03.04 Hong Kong-China 0-1
31.03.04 Malaysia-Kuwait 0-2
09.06.04 China-Malaysia 4-0
09.06.04 Kuwait-Hong Kong 4-0
08.09.04 Hong Kong-Kuwait 0-2
08.09.04 Malaysia-China 0-1
13.10.04 Hong Kong-Malaysia 2-0
13.10.04 Kuwait-China 1-0
17.11.04 China-Hong Kong 7-0
17.11.04 Kuwait-Malaysia 6-1

Group 5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
North Korea	6	3	2	1	11	5	11
UAE	6	3	1	2	6	6	10
Thailand	6	2	1	3	9	10	7
Yemen	6	1	2	3	6	11	5

18.02.04 UAE-Thailand 1-0
18.02.04 Yemen-North Korea 1-1
31.03.04 North Korea-UAE 0-0
31.03.04 Yemen-Thailand 0-3
09.06.04 Thailand-North Korea 1-4
09.06.04 UAE-Yemen 3-0
08.09.04 North Korea-Thailand 4-1
08.09.04 Yemen-UAE 3-1
13.10.04 North Korea-Yemen 2-1
13.10.04 Thailand-UAE 3-0
17.11.04 Thailand-Yemen 1-1
17.11.04 UAE-North Korea 1-0

Group 6

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bahrain	6	4	2	0	15	4	14
Syria	6	2	2	2	7	7	8
Tajikistan	6	2	1	3	5	9	7
Kyrgyzstan	6	1	1	4	5	12	4

18.02.04 Bahrain-Syria 2-1
18.02.04 Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan 1-2
31.03.04 Kyrgyzstan-Syria 1-1
31.03.04 Tajikistan-Bahrain 0-0
09.06.04 Bahrain-Kyrgyzstan 5-0
10.06.04 Syria-Tajikistan 2-1
08.09.04 Kyrgyzstan-Bahrain 1-2
08.09.04 Tajikistan-Syria 0-1
13.10.04 Syria-Bahrain 2-2
13.10.04 Tajikistan-Kyrgyzstan 2-1
17.11.04 Bahrain-Tajikistan 4-0
17.11.04 Syria-Kyrgyzstan 0-1

Group 7

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Korea	6	4	2	0	9	2	14
Lebanon	6	3	2	1	11	5	11
Vietnam	6	1	1	4	5	9	4
Maldives	6	1	1	4	5	14	4

18.02.04 South Korea-Lebanon 2-0
18.02.04 Vietnam-Maldives 4-0
31.03.04 Maldives-South Korea 0-0
31.03.04 Vietnam-Lebanon 0-2
09.06.04 Lebanon-Maldives 3-0
09.06.04 South Korea-Vietnam 2-0
08.09.04 Maldives-Lebanon 2-5
08.09.04 Vietnam-South Korea 1-2
13.10.04 Lebanon-South Korea 1-1
13.10.04 Maldives-Vietnam 3-0
17.11.04 Lebanon-Vietnam 0-0
17.11.04 South Korea-Maldives 2-0

Group 8

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Saudi Arabia	6	6	0	0	14	1	18
Turkmenistan	6	2	1	3	8	10	7
Indonesia	6	2	1	3	8	12	7
Sri Lanka	6	0	2	4	4	11	2

18.02.04 Saudi Arabia-Indonesia 3-0
18.02.04 Turkmenistan-Sri Lanka 2-0
31.03.04 Sri Lanka-Saudi Arabia 0-1
31.03.04 Turkmenistan-Indonesia 3-1
09.06.04 Indonesia-Sri Lanka 1-0
09.06.04 Saudi Arabia-Turkmenistan 3-0
08.09.04 Sri Lanka-Indonesia 2-2
08.09.04 Turkmenistan-Saudi Arabia 0-1
09.10.04 Sri Lanka-Turkmenistan 2-2
12.10.04 Indonesia-Saudi Arabia 1-3
17.11.04 Indonesia-Turkmenistan 3-1
17.11.04 Saudi Arabia-Sri Lanka 3-0

Group winners advanced to 2nd stage

2nd stage

Group 1

09.02.05 South Korea-Kuwait
09.02.05 Uzbekistan-Saudi Arabia
25.03.05 Kuwait-Uzbekistan
25.03.05 Saudi Arabia-South Korea
30.03.05 Kuwait-Saudi Arabia
30.03.05 South Korea-Uzbekistan
03.06.05 Saudi Arabia-Kuwait
03.06.05 Uzbekistan-South Korea
08.06.05 Kuwait-South Korea
08.06.05 Saudi Arabia-Uzbekistan
17.08.05 South Korea-Saudi Arabia
17.08.05 Uzbekistan-Kuwait

Group 2

09.02.05 Bahrain-Iran
09.02.05 Japan-North Korea
25.03.05 Iran-Japan
25.03.05 North Korea-Bahrain
30.03.05 Japan-Bahrain
30.03.05 North Korea-Iran
03.06.05 Iran-North Korea
03.06.05 Bahrain-Japan
08.06.05 Iran-Bahrain
08.06.05 North Korea-Japan
17.08.05 Bahrain-North Korea
17.08.05 Japan-Iran

Group winners and runners-up qualify for finals. The two third-placed teams meet in a two-leg play-off, the winners of which meet the fourth-placed CONCACAF team over two legs for a place in finals

Asian play-off matchdays: Sep 3 (1st leg), Oct 8 (2nd leg) - 2005

CONCACAF

3.5 finals berths

2nd stage

Group 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
United States	6	3	3	0	13	3	12
Panama	6	2	2	2	8	11	8
Jamaica	6	1	4	1	7	5	7
El Salvador	6	1	1	4	2	11	4

18.08.04 El Salvador-Panama 2-1
18.08.04 Jamaica-United States 1-1
04.09.04 Jamaica-Panama 1-2
04.09.04 United States-El Salvador 2-0
08.09.04 El Salvador-Jamaica 0-3
08.09.04 Panama-United States 1-1
09.10.04 El Salvador-United States 0-2
09.10.04 Panama-Jamaica 1-1
13.10.04 Jamaica-El Salvador 0-0
13.10.04 United States-Panama 6-0
17.11.04 Panama-El Salvador 3-0
17.11.04 United States-Jamaica 1-1

Group 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Costa Rica	6	3	1	2	12	8	10
Guatemala	6	3	1	2	7	9	10
Honduras	6	1	4	1	9	7	7
Canada	6	1	2	3	4	8	5

18.08.04 Canada-Guatemala 0-2
18.08.04 Costa Rica-Honduras 2-5
04.09.04 Canada-Honduras 1-1
05.09.04 Guatemala-Costa Rica 2-1
08.09.04 Costa Rica-Canada 1-0
08.09.04 Honduras-Guatemala 2-2
09.10.04 Costa Rica-Guatemala 5-0
09.10.04 Honduras-Canada 1-1
13.10.04 Canada-Costa Rica 1-3
13.10.04 Guatemala-Honduras 1-0
17.11.04 Guatemala-Canada 0-1
17.11.04 Honduras-Costa Rica 0-0

Group 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mexico	6	6	0	0	27	1	18
Trinidad & Tob	6	4	0	2	12	9	12
St Vincent/Gren	6	2	0	4	5	12	6
St Kitts & Nevis	6	0	0	6	2	24	0

18.08.04 St Vincent/Gren-Trin & Tob 0-2
04.09.04 St Kitts & Nev-Trinidad & Tob 1-2
08.09.04 Trinidad & Tobago-Mexico 1-3
10.09.04 St Vincent/Gren-St Kitts & N 1-0
06.10.04 Mexico-St Vincent/Gren 7-0
10.10.04 St Vincent/Gren-Mexico 0-1
10.10.04 Trinidad & Tob-St Kitts & Nev 5-1
13.10.04 Mexico-Trinidad & Tobago 3-0
13.10.04 St Kitts & N-St Vincent/Gren 0-3
13.11.04 St Kitts & Nevis-Mexico 0-5
17.11.04 Mexico-St Kitts & Nevis 8-0
17.11.04 Trin & Tob-St Vincent/Gren 2-1

Top two from each group advanced to 3rd stage

3rd stage

09.02.05 Costa Rica-Mexico
09.02.05 Panama-Guatemala
09.02.05 Trinidad & Tobago-United States
26/27.03.05 Costa Rica-Panama
26/27.03.05 Guatemala-Trinidad & Tobago
26/27.03.05 Mexico-United States
30.03.05 Panama-Mexico
30.03.05 Trinidad & Tobago-Costa Rica
30.03.05 United States-Guatemala
04/05.06.05 Guatemala-Mexico
04/05.06.05 Trinidad & Tobago-Panama
04/05.06.05 United States-Costa Rica
08.06.05 Costa Rica-Guatemala
08.06.05 Mexico-Trinidad & Tobago
08.06.05 Panama-United States
17.08.05 Guatemala-Panama
17.08.05 Mexico-Costa Rica
17.08.05 United States-Trinidad & Tobago
03/04.09.05 Panama-Costa Rica
03/04.09.05 Trinidad & Tobago-Guatemala
03/04.09.05 United States-Mexico
07.09.05 Costa Rica-Trinidad & Tobago
07.09.05 Guatemala-United States
07.09.05 Mexico-Panama
08/09.10.05 Costa Rica-United States
08/09.10.05 Mexico-Guatemala
08/09.10.05 Panama-Trinidad & Tobago
12.10.05 Guatemala-Costa Rica
12.10.05 Trinidad & Tobago-Mexico
12.10.05 United States-Panama

Top three qualify for finals. The fourth-placed team meet the winners of the Asian play-off over two legs for a place in finals

EUROPE

14 finals berths (including hosts Germany, who qualify automatically)

Group 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Holland	4	3	1	0	10	3	10
Romania	5	3	1	1	10	5	10
Finland	5	3	0	2	10	6	9
Czech Republic	4	3	0	1	6	2	9
Macedonia	5	1	1	3	6	7	4
Andorra	4	1	0	3	2	11	3
Armenia	5	0	1	4	2	12	1

18.08.04 Macedonia-Armenia 3-0
18.08.04 Romania-Finland 2-1
04.09.04 Finland-Andorra 3-0
04.09.04 Romania-Macedonia 2-1
08.09.04 Andorra-Romania 1-5
08.09.04 Armenia-Finland 0-2
08.09.04 Holland-Czech Republic 2-0
09.10.04 Czech Republic-Romania 1-0
09.10.04 Finland-Armenia 3-1
09.10.04 Macedonia-Holland 2-2
13.10.04 Andorra-Macedonia 1-0
13.10.04 Armenia-Czech Republic 0-3
13.10.04 Holland-Finland 3-1
17.11.04 Andorra-Holland 0-3
17.11.04 Armenia-Romania 1-1
17.11.04 Macedonia-Czech Republic 0-2
09.02.05 Macedonia-Andorra
26.03.05 Armenia-Andorra
26.03.05 Czech Republic-Finland
26.03.05 Romania-Holland
30.03.05 Andorra-Czech Republic
30.03.05 Holland-Armenia
30.03.05 Macedonia-Romania
04.06.05 Armenia-Macedonia
04.06.05 Czech Republic-Andorra
04.06.05 Holland-Romania
08.06.05 Czech Republic-Macedonia
08.06.05 Finland-Holland
08.06.05 Romania-Armenia
17.08.05 Macedonia-Finland
17.08.05 Romania-Andorra
03.09.05 Andorra-Finland
03.09.05 Armenia-Holland
03.09.05 Romania-Czech Republic
07.09.05 Czech Republic-Armenia
07.09.05 Finland-Macedonia
07.09.05 Holland-Andorra
08.10.05 Czech Republic-Holland
08.10.05 Finland-Romania
12.10.05 Andorra-Armenia
12.10.05 Finland-Czech Republic
12.10.05 Holland-Macedonia

Group 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ukraine	5	3	2	0	9	3	11
Denmark	4	1	3	0	6	4	6
Turkey	5	1	3	1	6	5	6
Albania	4	2	0	2	3	5	6
Greece	4	1	2	1	5	4	5
Georgia	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
Kazakhstan	4	0	0	4	2	10	0

04.09.04 Albania-Greece 2-1
04.09.04 Denmark-Ukraine 1-1
04.09.04 Turkey-Georgia 1-1
08.09.04 Georgia-Albania 2-0
08.09.04 Greece-Turkey 0-0
08.09.04 Kazakhstan-Ukraine 1-2
09.10.04 Albania-Denmark 0-2
09.10.04 Turkey-Kazakhstan 4-0
09.10.04 Ukraine-Greece 1-1
13.10.04 Denmark-Turkey 1-1
13.10.04 Kazakhstan-Albania 0-1
13.10.04 Ukraine-Georgia 2-0
17.11.04 Georgia-Denmark 2-2
17.11.04 Greece-Kazakhstan 3-1
17.11.04 Turkey-Ukraine 0-3
09.02.05 Albania-Ukraine
09.02.05 Greece-Denmark
26.03.05 Denmark-Kazakhstan
26.03.05 Georgia-Greece
26.03.05 Turkey-Albania
30.03.05 Georgia-Turkey
30.03.05 Greece-Albania
30.03.05 Ukraine-Denmark
04.06.05 Albania-Georgia
04.06.05 Turkey-Greece
04.06.05 Ukraine-Kazakhstan
08.06.05 Denmark-Albania
08.06.05 Greece-Ukraine
08.06.05 Kazakhstan-Turkey
17.08.05 Kazakhstan-Georgia
03.09.05 Albania-Kazakhstan
03.09.05 Georgia-Ukraine
03.09.05 Turkey-Denmark
07.09.05 Denmark-Georgia
07.09.05 Kazakhstan-Greece
07.09.05 Ukraine-Turkey
08.10.05 Denmark-Greece
08.10.05 Georgia-Kazakhstan
08.10.05 Ukraine-Albania
12.10.05 Albania-Turkey
12.10.05 Greece-Georgia
12.10.05 Kazakhstan-Denmark

Group 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portugal	5	4	1	0	20	3	13
Slovakia	4	3	1	0	15	3	10
Russia	4	2	1	1	10	8	7
Latvia	5	2	1	2	10	12	7
Estonia	5	2	1	2	8	11	7
Liechtenstein	5	1	1	3	8	14	4
Luxembourg	6	0	0	6	4	24	0

18.08.04 Liechtenstein-Estonia 1-2
18.08.04 Slovakia-Luxembourg 3-1
04.09.04 Estonia-Luxembourg 4-0
04.09.04 Latvia-Portugal 0-2
04.09.04 Russia-Slovakia 1-1
08.09.04 Luxembourg-Latvia 3-4
08.09.04 Portugal-Estonia 4-0
08.09.04 Slovakia-Liechtenstein 7-0
09.10.04 Liechtenstein-Portugal 2-2
09.10.04 Luxembourg-Russia 0-4
09.10.04 Slovakia-Latvia 4-1
13.10.04 Latvia-Estonia 2-2
13.10.04 Luxembourg-Liechtenstein 0-4
13.10.04 Portugal-Russia 7-1
17.11.04 Liechtenstein-Latvia 1-3
17.11.04 Luxembourg-Portugal 0-5
17.11.04 Russia-Estonia 4-0
26.03.05 Estonia-Slovakia
26.03.05 Liechtenstein-Russia
30.03.05 Estonia-Russia
30.03.05 Latvia-Luxembourg
30.03.05 Slovakia-Portugal
04.06.05 Estonia-Liechtenstein
04.06.05 Portugal-Slovakia
04.06.05 Russia-Latvia
08.06.05 Estonia-Portugal
08.06.05 Latvia-Liechtenstein
08.06.05 Luxembourg-Slovakia
17.08.05 Latvia-Russia
17.08.05 Liechtenstein-Slovakia
03.09.05 Estonia-Latvia
03.09.05 Portugal-Luxembourg
03.09.05 Russia-Liechtenstein
07.09.05 Latvia-Slovakia
07.09.05 Liechtenstein-Luxembourg
07.09.05 Russia-Portugal
08.10.05 Portugal-Liechtenstein
08.10.05 Russia-Luxembourg
08.10.05 Slovakia-Estonia
12.10.05 Luxembourg-Estonia
12.10.05 Portugal-Latvia
12.10.05 Slovakia-Russia

Group 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
France	4	2	2	0	4	0	8
Rep Ireland	4	2	2	0	6	1	8
Israel	4	2	2	0	6	4	8
Switzerland	3	1	2	0	9	3	5
Faroe Islands	4	0	1	3	2	12	1
Cyprus	5	0	1	4	4	11	1

04.09.04 France-Israel 0-0
04.09.04 Rep Ireland-Cyprus 3-0
04.09.04 Switzerland-Faroe Islands 6-0
08.09.04 Faroe Islands-France 0-2
08.09.04 Israel-Cyprus 2-1
08.09.04 Switzerland-Rep Ireland 1-1
09.10.04 Cyprus-Faroe Islands 2-2
09.10.04 France-Rep Ireland 0-0
09.10.04 Israel-Switzerland 2-2
13.10.04 Cyprus-France 0-2
13.10.04 Rep Ireland-Faroe Islands 2-0
17.11.04 Cyprus-Israel 1-2
26.03.05 Israel-Rep Ireland
26.03.05 France-Switzerland
30.03.05 Israel-France
30.03.05 Switzerland-Cyprus
04.06.05 Faroe Islands-Switzerland

04.06.05 Rep Ireland-Israel
08.06.05 Faroe Islands-Rep Ireland
17.08.05 Faroe Islands-Cyprus
03.09.05 France-Faroe Islands
03.09.05 Switzerland-Israel
07.09.05 Cyprus-Switzerland
07.09.05 Faroe Islands-Israel
07.09.05 Rep Ireland-France
08.10.05 Cyprus-Rep Ireland
08.10.05 Switzerland-France
08.10.05 Israel-Faroe Islands
12.10.05 France-Cyprus
12.10.05 Rep Ireland-Switzerland

Group 5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italy	4	3	0	1	7	5	9
Norway	4	2	1	1	6	3	7
Slovenia	4	2	1	1	4	3	7
Belarus	3	1	1	1	8	5	4
Scotland	3	0	2	1	1	2	2
Moldova	4	0	1	3	1	9	1

04.09.04 Italy-Norway 2-1
04.09.04 Slovenia-Moldova 3-0
08.09.04 Moldova-Italy 0-1
08.09.04 Norway-Belarus 1-1
08.09.04 Scotland-Slovenia 0-0
09.10.04 Belarus-Moldova 4-0
09.10.04 Scotland-Norway 0-1
09.10.04 Slovenia-Italy 1-0
13.10.04 Italy-Belarus 4-3
13.10.04 Moldova-Scotland 1-1
13.10.04 Norway-Slovenia 3-0
26.03.05 Italy-Scotland
30.03.05 Moldova-Norway
30.03.05 Slovenia-Belarus
04.06.05 Belarus-Slovenia
04.06.05 Norway-Italy
04.06.05 Scotland-Moldova
08.06.05 Belarus-Scotland
03.09.05 Moldova-Belarus
03.09.05 Scotland-Italy
03.09.05 Slovenia-Norway
07.09.05 Belarus-Italy
07.09.05 Moldova-Slovenia
07.09.05 Norway-Scotland
08.10.05 Italy-Slovenia
08.10.05 Norway-Moldova
08.10.05 Scotland-Belarus
12.10.05 Belarus-Norway
12.10.05 Italy-Moldova
12.10.05 Slovenia-Scotland

Group 6

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England	4	3	1	0	7	3	10
Poland	4	3	0	1	10	5	9
Austria	4	1	2	1	8	8	5
N Ireland	4	0	3	1	5	8	3
Wales	4	0	2	2	5	8	2
Azerbaijan	4	0	2	2	1	4	2

04.09.04 Austria-England 2-2
04.09.04 Azerbaijan-Wales 1-1
04.09.04 Northern Ireland-Poland 0-3
08.09.04 Austria-Azerbaijan 2-0
08.09.04 Poland-England 1-2
08.09.04 Wales-Northern Ireland 2-2
09.10.04 Austria-Poland 1-3
09.10.04 Azerbaijan-Northern Ireland 0-0
09.10.04 England-Wales 2-0
13.10.04 Azerbaijan-England 0-1
13.10.04 Northern Ireland-Austria 3-3
13.10.04 Wales-Poland 2-3
26.03.05 England-Northern Ireland
26.03.05 Poland-Azerbaijan
26.03.05 Wales-Austria
30.03.05 Austria-Wales
30.03.05 England-Azerbaijan
30.03.05 Poland-Northern Ireland
04.06.05 Azerbaijan-Poland
03.09.05 Northern Ireland-Azerbaijan
03.09.05 Poland-Austria
03.09.05 Wales-England
07.09.05 Azerbaijan-Austria
07.09.05 Northern Ireland-England
07.09.05 Poland-Wales
08.10.05 England-Austria
08.10.05 Northern Ireland-Wales
12.10.05 Austria-Northern Ireland
12.10.05 England-Poland
12.10.05 Wales-Azerbaijan

Group 7

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Serbia & M'gro	4	3	1	0	10	0	10
Lithuania	4	2	2	0	6	1	8
Spain	3	1	2	0	3	1	5
Bosnia-Herz	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Belgium	3	0	1	2	1	5	1
San Marino	4	0	0	4	0	13	0

04.09.04 Belgium-Lithuania 1-1
04.09.04 San Marino-Serbia & M'negro . 0-3
08.09.04 Bosnia-Herzegovina-Spain 1-1
08.09.04 Lithuania-San Marino 4-0
09.10.04 Bosnia-Herz.-Serbia & M'negro0-0
09.10.04 Spain-Belgium 2-0
13.10.04 Lithuania-Spain 0-0
13.10.04 Serbia & M'negro-San Marino . 5-0
17.11.04 Belgium-Serbia & M'negro 0-2
17.11.04 San Marino-Lithuania 0-1
09.02.05 Spain-San Marino
26.03.05 Belgium-Bosnia-Herzegovina
30.03.05 Bosnia-Herzegovina-Lithuania
30.03.05 San Marino-Belgium
30.03.05 Serbia & M'negro-Spain
04.06.05 San Marino-Bosnia-Herzegovina
04.06.05 Serbia & M'negro-Belgium
04.06.05 Spain-Lithuania
08.06.05 Spain-Bosnia-Herzegovina
03.09.05 Bosnia-Herzegovina-Belgium
03.09.05 Serbia & M'negro-Lithuania
07.09.05 Belgium-San Marino
07.09.05 Lithuania-Bosnia-Herzegovina
07.09.05 Spain-Serbia & M'negro
08.10.05 Belgium-Spain
08.10.05 Bosnia-Herzegovina-San Marino
08.10.05 Lithuania-Serbia & M'negro
12.10.05 Lithuania-Belgium
12.10.05 San Marino-Spain
12.10.05 Serbia & M'negro-Bosnia-Herz.

Group 8

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sweden	4	3	0	1	14	2	9
Bulgaria	3	2	1	0	9	4	7
Croatia	3	2	1	0	6	2	7
Hungary	4	2	0	2	5	8	6
Iceland	4	0	1	3	4	10	1
Malta	4	0	1	3	1	13	1

04.09.04 Croatia-Hungary 3-0
04.09.04 Iceland-Bulgaria 1-3
04.09.04 Malta-Sweden 0-7
08.09.04 Hungary-Iceland 3-2
08.09.04 Sweden-Croatia 0-1
09.10.04 Croatia-Bulgaria 2-2
09.10.04 Malta-Iceland 0-0
09.10.04 Sweden-Hungary 3-0
13.10.04 Bulgaria-Malta 4-1
13.10.04 Iceland-Sweden 1-4
17.11.04 Malta-Hungary 0-2
26.03.05 Bulgaria-Sweden
26.03.05 Croatia-Iceland
30.03.05 Croatia-Malta
30.03.05 Hungary-Bulgaria
04.06.05 Bulgaria-Croatia
04.06.05 Iceland-Hungary
04.06.05 Sweden-Malta
08.06.05 Iceland-Malta
03.09.05 Hungary-Malta
03.09.05 Iceland-Croatia
03.09.05 Sweden-Bulgaria
07.09.05 Bulgaria-Iceland
07.09.05 Hungary-Sweden
07.09.05 Malta-Croatia
08.10.05 Bulgaria-Hungary
08.10.05 Croatia-Sweden
12.10.05 Hungary-Croatia
12.10.05 Malta-Bulgaria
12.10.05 Sweden-Iceland

Group winners and the two best runners-up qualify for finals. The other six runners-up are paired in three two-leg play-off matches, the winners of which also qualify for finals*
**Group runners-up will be ranked according to their results against the teams finishing 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th in their respective groups*

European play-off matchdays: Nov 12 (1st leg), Nov 16 (2nd leg) - 2005

OCEANIA

0.5 finals berths

3rd stage

03.09.05 Australia-Solomon Islands
07.09.05 Solomon Islands-Australia

Winners meet the fifth-placed South American team over two legs for a place in finals

SOUTH AMERICA

4.5 finals berths

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Argentina	11	6	4	1	21	11	22
Brazil	11	5	5	1	19	11	20
Paraguay	11	4	4	3	12	11	16
Ecuador	11	5	1	5	12	11	16
Uruguay	11	4	2	5	16	23	14
Chile	11	3	4	4	10	11	13
Colombia	11	3	4	4	12	11	13
Venezuela	11	4	1	6	13	17	13
Peru	11	3	4	4	13	13	13
Bolivia	11	3	1	7	11	20	10

06.09.03 Argentina-Chile 2-2
06.09.03 Ecuador-Venezuela 2-0
06.09.03 Peru-Paraguay 4-1
07.09.03 Colombia-Brazil 1-2
07.09.03 Uruguay-Bolivia 5-0
09.09.03 Chile-Peru 2-1
09.09.03 Venezuela-Argentina 0-3
10.09.03 Bolivia-Colombia 4-0
10.09.03 Brazil-Ecuador 1-0
10.09.03 Paraguay-Uruguay 4-1
15.11.03 Argentina-Bolivia 3-0
15.11.03 Colombia-Venezuela 0-1
15.11.03 Paraguay-Ecuador 2-1
15.11.03 Uruguay-Chile 2-1
16.11.03 Peru-Brazil 1-1
18.11.03 Chile-Paraguay 0-1
18.11.03 Venezuela-Bolivia 2-1
19.11.03 Brazil-Uruguay 3-3
19.11.03 Colombia-Argentina 1-1
19.11.03 Ecuador-Peru 0-0
30.03.04 Argentina-Ecuador 1-0
30.03.04 Bolivia-Chile 0-2
31.03.04 Paraguay-Brazil 0-0
31.03.04 Peru-Colombia 0-2
31.03.04 Uruguay-Venezuela 0-3
01.06.04 Bolivia-Paraguay 2-1
01.06.04 Uruguay-Peru 1-3
01.06.04 Venezuela-Chile 0-1
02.06.04 Brazil-Argentina 3-1
02.06.04 Ecuador-Colombia 2-1
05.06.04 Ecuador-Bolivia 3-2
06.06.04 Argentina-Paraguay 0-0
06.06.04 Chile-Brazil 1-1
06.06.04 Colombia-Uruguay 5-0
06.06.04 Peru-Venezuela 0-0
04.09.04 Peru-Argentina 1-3
05.09.04 Brazil-Bolivia 3-1
05.09.04 Chile-Colombia 0-0
05.09.04 Paraguay-Venezuela 1-0
05.09.04 Uruguay-Ecuador 1-0
09.10.04 Argentina-Uruguay 4-2
09.10.04 Bolivia-Peru 1-0
09.10.04 Colombia-Paraguay 1-1
09.10.04 Venezuela-Brazil 2-5
10.10.04 Ecuador-Chile 2-0
12.10.04 Bolivia-Uruguay 0-0
13.10.04 Brazil-Colombia 0-0
13.10.04 Chile-Argentina 0-0
13.10.04 Paraguay-Peru 1-1
14.10.04 Venezuela-Ecuador 3-1
17.11.04 Argentina-Venezuela 3-2
17.11.04 Colombia-Bolivia 1-0
17.11.04 Ecuador-Brazil 1-0
17.11.04 Peru-Chile 2-1
17.11.04 Uruguay-Paraguay 1-0
26/27.03.05 Bolivia-Argentina
26/27.03.05 Brazil-Peru
26/27.03.05 Chile-Uruguay
26/27.03.05 Ecuador-Paraguay
26/27.03.05 Venezuela-Colombia
29/30.03.05 Argentina-Colombia
29/30.03.05 Bolivia-Venezuela
29/30.03.05 Paraguay-Chile
29/30.03.05 Peru-Ecuador
29/30.03.05 Uruguay-Brazil
04/05.06.05 Brazil-Paraguay
04/05.06.05 Chile-Bolivia
04/05.06.05 Colombia-Peru
04/05.06.05 Ecuador-Argentina
04/05.06.05 Venezuela-Uruguay
07/08.06.05 Argentina-Brazil
07/08.06.05 Chile-Venezuela
07/08.06.05 Colombia-Ecuador
07/08.06.05 Paraguay-Bolivia
07/08.06.05 Peru-Uruguay
03/04.09.05 Bolivia-Ecuador
03/04.09.05 Brazil-Chile
03/04.09.05 Paraguay-Argentina
03/04.09.05 Uruguay-Colombia
03/04.09.05 Venezuela-Peru
08/09.10.05 Argentina-Peru
08/09.10.05 Bolivia-Brazil
08/09.10.05 Colombia-Chile
08/09.10.05 Ecuador-Uruguay
08/09.10.05 Venezuela-Paraguay
11/12.10.05 Brazil-Venezuela
11/12.10.05 Chile-Ecuador
11/12.10.05 Paraguay-Colombia
11/12.10.05 Peru-Bolivia
11/12.10.05 Uruguay-Argentina

Top four qualify for finals; fifth-placed team meet the Oceania section winners over two legs for a place in finals

FINALS SCHEDULE

June 9, 2006	Opening match
June 24-27	Second round
June 30-July 1	Quarter-finals
July 4 & 5	Semi-finals
July 8	Third-place play-off
July 9	Final

Venues: Berlin, Cologne, Dortmund, Frankfurt, Gelsenkirchen, Hamburg, Hanover, Kaiserslautern, Leipzig, Munich, Nurnberg, Stuttgart.

INTERNATIONALS

Monday, November 29

Nov 29 - Cairo - friendly
Egypt 1 (Moteab 85)
Bulgaria 1 (Gargorov 90)
HT: 0-0
Egypt: Abdelwahed El-Sayed - Fathi (Ghani), Al-Tabei, Goma'a, Hassan (T Said), Abd Rabo, Shawki, Aboutraika, Barakat (Moustafa), Ali (Aaty), Moteab.
Bulgaria: Ivankov (Kolev 66) - Karaslavov, Markov, Topuzakov, Venkov, Georgiev (Gargorov 62), Yankov, Stoyanov, Kamburov, Sakaliev, Iliev.

Thursday, December 2

Dec 2 - friendly
Qatar 4 (S Al-Shammari, Mohamed, Saleh, Koni)
Lebanon 1 (Naserdeen pen)
HT: 1-0

Friday, December 3

Dec 3 - United Arab Emirates - friendly
Iraq 3
Yemen 1
HT: 1-1

Dec 3 - Dubai - friendly
United Arab Emirates 1 (Said 26)
Kuwait 1 (Al-Fahad 80)
HT: 1-0

Sunday, December 5

Dec 5 - friendly
Qatar 3
Yemen 0
HT: 0-0

Monday, December 6

Dec 6 - Kuwait City - friendly
Kuwait 3 (B Abdullah 19, Lahib 90, Al-Hmeidan 90)
Tajikistan 0
HT: 1-0

Wednesday, December 15

Dec 15 - friendly
Lesotho 1
Botswana 1

Thursday, December 16
Dec 16 - Yokohama - friendly
Japan 0
Germany 3 (Klose 54, 90, Ballack 69)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 61,805. **Ref:** Shield (Aus)
Japan: Narazaki - Kaji, Tanaka, Chano, Alex (Nishi 83), Fukunishi, Inamoto (Endo 70), Ogasawara, Fujita (Miura 70), Suzuki (Tamada 46), Takahara (Okubo 70).
Germany: Kahn - Owomoyela, Worns, Mertesacker, Schulz, Ernst (Engelhardt 77), Schneider (Borowski 73), Ballack, Asamoah, Podolski (Schweinsteiger 62), Klose.

Saturday, December 18
Dec 18 - Tehran - friendly
Iran 1 (Daei pen 38)
Panama 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Esfahanian (Irn)
Iran: Mirzapour - Kameli-Mofrad, Nosrati, Kaebi (Mobali 46), Badavi, Alavi, Vahedinikbakht (Borhani 66), Nekounam, Azizi (Zare 46), Majidi (Madanchi 65), Daei.
Panama: Penedo - Rivera, Moreno, Henriques, Miranda (Steward 50), Blanco, Aguilar, Perez (Medina 72), Tejada (Rodriguez 78), Phillips, Cubillas (Gomez 60).

Dec 18 - Male - friendly
Maldives 0
Sri Lanka 0

Sunday, December 19
Dec 19 - Busan - friendly
South Korea 3 (Kim Dong-jin 16, Lee Dong-gook 71, Cho Jae-jin 87)
Germany 1 (Ballack 24)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 45,775. **Ref:** Mohd Salleh (Mly)
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae (Kim Young-kwang 88) - Park Dong-hyuk, Kim Jin-kyu, Park Jae-hong, Park Kyu-seon (You Kyoung-youl 90), Kim Sang-sik, Kim Dong-jin, Cha Doo-ri, Kim Do-heon (Kim Jung-woo 45), Lee Dong-gook (Cho Jae-jin 81), Kim Dong-hun (Namkung Do 62).
Germany: Kahn - Hinkel (Owomoyela 46), Friedrich, Worns (Brdaric 86), Lahm, Ernst, Schneider, Ballack, Schweinsteiger (Podolski 63), Kuranyi (Asamoah 76), Klose.

Tuesday, December 21
Dec 21 - Bangkok - friendly
Thailand 1 (Sarayoot 57)
Germany 5 (Kuranyi 34, 38, Podolski 73, 89, Asamoah 84)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Maidin (Sin)
Thailand: Kosin - Weerayoot (Anon 75), Nakarin, Niweat, Rungroj (Songsak 45), Therdsak, Sakda (Atthipol 57), Kittisak (Jakapong 81), Yuttajak, Sarif (Piyawat 57), Sarayoot (Suriya 70).
Germany: Hildebrand - Hinkel (Owomoyela 33), Mertesacker, Friedrich (Worns 67), Lahm (Schulz 60), Borowski, Engelhardt, Schweinsteiger, Asamoah, Brdaric (Podolski 60), Kuranyi.

Dec 21 - Caracas - friendly
Venezuela 0
Guatemala 1 (Ruiz 89)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Solorzano (Ven)
Venezuela: Toyo - De Ornelas (C Gonzalez 45), Rouga, Vielma, Rojas (Cichero 58), Jimenez (M Mea Vitali 46), A Gonzalez, H Gonzalez, Paez (Hernandez 58), Maldonado (Acuna 67), Torrealba (Castellin 46).
Guatemala: Klee (Trigueno 46) - Morales, Martinez (G Cabrera 40), Thompson, Romero (Zacarias 62), Hernandez, Ramirez (Castillo 62), Rodriguez (Navas 62), Sanabria, Ruiz, Pezzarossi.

Saturday, January 8
Jan 8 - Cairo - friendly
Egypt 3 (Zaki pen 37, 67, Shawki 61)
Uganda 0
HT: 1-0
Egypt: Abdelwahed El-Sayed (Monsef) - El-Shater, Al-Tabei, Goma'a, O Hassan (T Said), Abd Rabo, Shawki, Zaki, Aboutraika, Moteab (Moustafa), Aaty (Malek).

Wednesday, January 12
Jan 12 - San Jose - friendly
Costa Rica 3 (Centeno 2, Scott 10, Herron pen 13)
Haiti 3 (Cadet 18, 39, Germain 90)
HT: 3-1. **Ref:** Porras (CR)
Costa Rica: Mesen - Marin (Umana 46), Chinchilla, Wallace, L Gonzalez, M Solis (Segura 83), Lopez, Bryce (Hernandez 46), Centeno (Soto 61), Scott (R Fonseca 61), Herron (Sunsing 69).
Haiti: Beauzile - Bruny, Desir, Gilles, Kenol, Descolines, Germain, Puques, Romulus, Mesidor (Ulcena 58), Cadet.

BAHRAIN TOURNAMENT

Semi-finals
Dec 1 - Manama
Bahrain 1 (H Ali 6)
Finland 2 (Pohja 9, Huusko 67)
HT: 1-1
Finland: Kaven - Nyman, Pasoja, Kallio, Hietanen, Pohja (Pulkkinen 90), Heinikangas, Okkonen, Svanback (Oravainen 62), Litmanen (Lehtinen 76), Huusko (Nordback 88).

Dec 1 - Manama
Oman 3 (A Mubarak 39, Ayel 62, Kamouna 90)
Latvia 2 (Rimkus 66, Rubins 68)
HT: 1-0
Latvia: Vanins - Blagonadezdins (Zavoronkovs 1), Zakresevskis, Korablovs, Smirnovs, Semjonovs (Blanks 68), Morozs, Kolesnicenko (Kalnins 53), Visnjakovs, Rubins, Rimkus.

Third-place play-off
Dec 3 - Manama
Bahrain 2 (Adnan 2, H Ali 71)
Latvia 2 (Kolesnicenko pen 22, Zakresevskis 35)
HT: 1-2
Bahrain 4-2 on pens
Latvia: Romanovs - Zakresevskis, Korablovs, Smirnovs, Zavoronkovs, Morozs, Visnakovs (Blanks 82), Rubins, Kolesnicenko, Mihalcuks (Semjonovs 46), Rimkus (Kalnins 64).

Final
Dec 3 - Manama
Oman 0
Finland 0
Oman 4-3 on pens
Finland: Sillanpaa - Pulkkinen (Nyman 46), Rasanen, Kallio, Kononen, Pohja (Oravainen 75), Nordback (Pasoja 90), Kujala (Okkonen 46), Scheweleff (Hietanen 83), Litmanen, Lehtinen (Huusko 77).

TIGER INTL FOOTBALL FESTIVAL

In Singapore

Nov 27
Singapore 1 (Alam Shah 78)
Myanmar 0
HT: 0-0

Nov 30
Singapore 0
Hong Kong 0
Hong Kong 6-5 on pens

Dec 2
Myanmar 2 (Yan Paing 28, 84)
Hong Kong 2 (Feng Ji-zhi 18, Lo Chi-kwan 32)
HT: 1-2
No penalty shoot-out was held

CECAFA CUP
(Council of East and Central African Football Associations)

In Addis Abeba, Ethiopia

Group A
Dec 11
Ethiopia 2 (Shegere 18, Tefera 20)
Burundi 1 (Hakizimana pen 75)
HT: 2-0

Dec 11
Rwanda 4 (Lomani 8, 27, 48, Karekezi 24)
Zanzibar 2 (Abdulla 4, Ndyizeye 88)
HT: 3-1

Dec 13
Burundi 3 (Hakizimana pen 51, Ntibazonkizia 54, Nzohabonayo 83)
Rwanda 1 (Gatete 59)
HT: 0-0

Dec 13
Zanzibar 4 (Abdella pen 6, Juma 29, 73, Mohamed 85)
Tanzania 2 (Mexime 23, Rajab 32)
HT: 2-2
Sent off: Rajab (Tanzania) 88min

Dec 15
Burundi 2 (Kubis 46, 90)
Tanzania 0
HT: 0-0

Dec 15
Ethiopia 0
Rwanda 0

Dec 17
Burundi 2 (Nahimana 43, Hakizimana pen 78)
Zanzibar 1 (Ibrahim 73)
HT: 1-0

Dec 17
Ethiopia 2 (Alamirew 55, Tesfaye 90)
Tanzania 0
HT: 0-0

Dec 19
Ethiopia 3 (Tefera 50, Girima 54, Mensur 64)
Zanzibar 0
HT: 0-0

Dec 19
Tanzania 1
Rwanda 5 (Lomani 3, Karekezi, Zibomana)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ethiopia	4	3	1	0	7	1	10
Burundi	4	3	0	1	8	4	9
Rwanda	4	2	1	1	10	6	7
Zanzibar	4	1	0	3	7	11	3
Tanzania	4	0	0	4	3	13	0

Group B
Dec 12
Kenya 2 (Sirengo 37, Barasa 72)
Sudan 2 (Mustafa pen 45, Kamal 79)
HT: 1-1

Dec 12
Uganda 2 (Kalungi 30, 42)
Somalia 0
HT: 2-0

Dec 14
Somalia 0
Kenya 1 (Barasa 7)
HT: 0-1

Dec 14
Sudan 2 (Kamal 3, Haytamel 75)
Uganda 1 (Mwesinga 82)
HT: 1-0

Dec 18
Kenya 1 (Mururi 20)
Uganda 1 (Obua pen 77)
HT: 1-0

Dec 18
Sudan 4 (Mustafa 47, Hameedama 63, Kamal 69, Omer Adam)
Somalia 0
HT: 0-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sudan	3	2	1	0	8	3	7
Kenya	3	1	2	0	4	3	5
Uganda	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
Somalia	3	0	0	3	0	7	0

Semi-finals
Dec 22
Ethiopia 2 (Alamirew 24, Tesfaye 58)
Kenya 2 (Mururi 66, Barasa 85)
HT: 1-0
Ethiopia 5-4 on pens

Dec 22
Sudan 1 (Mustafa pen 54)
Burundi 2 (Ntibazonkizia 22, Lewis 75)
HT: 0-1

Third-place play-off
Dec 24
Kenya 1 (Barasa 82)
Sudan 2 (Kamal 30, 60)
HT: 0-1

Final
Dec 25 - Addis Abeba stadium
Ethiopia 3 (Nigussie 25, Tesfaye 32, Alamirew 49)
Burundi 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 35,000

GULF CUP

In Doha, Qatar

Group A
Dec 10
Iraq 1 (Razzaq 56)
Oman 3 (Ali 28, 47, Ayel 54)
HT: 0-1

Dec 10
Qatar 2 (Jassim 89, Rizik 90)
United Arab Emirates 2 (S Khater pen 41, Mattar 83)
HT: 0-1

Dec 13
Oman 2 (Yousuf 74, B Mubarak 85)
United Arab Emirates 1 (Masoud 45)
HT: 0-1

Dec 13
Qatar 3 (Mohammed 38, Jassim pen 42, 56)
Iraq 3 (Razzaq 16, Nashat 53, Haidar 90)
HT: 2-1

Dec 16
United Arab Emirates 1 (Khalil 69)
Iraq 1 (Qusai pen 90)
HT: 0-0

Dec 16
Qatar 2 (Sattam 11, Bashir 29)
Oman 1 (Saeed 27)
HT: 2-1
Sent off: A Mubarak (Oman) 89min

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Oman	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
Qatar	3	1	2	0	7	6	5
UAE	3	0	2	1	4	5	2
Iraq	3	0	2	1	5	7	2

Group B
Dec 11
Yemen 1 (Ghazi 47)
Bahrain 1 (Yusuf 25)
HT: 0-1

Dec 11
Saudi Arabia 1 (Al-Qahtani 13)
Kuwait 2 (Nada 66, Al-Mutawa 87)
HT: 1-0
Sent off: Noor (Saudi Arabia) 45min; Khaled Al-Shammari (Kuwait) 64min

Dec 14
Kuwait 1 (Jarragh 15)
Bahrain 1 (H Ali 45)
HT: 1-1
Sent off: N Al-Mutairi (Kuwait) 43min

Dec 14
Yemen 0
Saudi Arabia 2 (Al-Otaibi 34, Sowed 48)
HT: 0-1

Dec 17
Bahrain 3 (Al-Marzouqi 64, Issa 78, Yusuf 90)
Saudi Arabia 0
HT: 0-0
Sent off: Noor (Saudi Arabia) 62min

Dec 17
Kuwait 3 (B Abdullah 17, 90, Al-Mutawa 80)
Yemen 0
HT: 1-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kuwait	3	2	1	0	6	2	7
Bahrain	3	1	2	0	5	2	5
Saudi Arabia	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
Yemen	3	0	1	2	1	6	1

Semi-finals
Dec 20
Oman 3 (Ali 44, 83, Al-Maymani 50)
Bahrain 2 (Jalal 51, Naser 77)
HT: 1-0

Dec 20
Kuwait 0
Qatar 2 (Bashir 39, Kamil pen 90)
HT: 0-1

Third-place play-off

Dec 23
Bahrain 3 (Nada og 32, A Hubail 57, Naser 90)
Kuwait 1 (Khodeir 35)
HT: 1-1

Final

Dec 24 - Al Sadd stadium, Doha
Oman 1 (Al-Maymani 25)
Qatar 1 (Rizik 4)
Aet. **HT:** 1-1. **90mins:** 1-1
Qatar 5-4 on pens

TIGER CUP

Group A
In Vietnam

Dec 7 - Ho Chi Minh City
Laos 0
Indonesia 6 (Boas 26, Ilham 29, 34, S Khanyavong og 53, Aiboy 60, Kurniawan 87)
HT: 0-3

Dec 7 - Ho Chi Minh City
Singapore 1 (Indra 70)
Vietnam 1 (Thach Bao Khan 51)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Sun (Chn)

Dec 9 - Ho Chi Minh City
Cambodia 1 (Sokunthea 44)
Vietnam 9 (Thach Bao Khanh 8, 23, Le Cong Vinh 58, 87, 89, Sampratna og 61, Dang Van Thanh 70, 83, Nguyen Huy Hoang 76)
HT: 1-2

Dec 9 - Ho Chi Minh City
Indonesia 0
Singapore 0

Dec 11 - Hanoi
Laos 2 (Chalana Luang Amath pen 63, pen 73)
Cambodia 1 (Darith 27)
HT: 0-1

Dec 11 - Hanoi
Vietnam 0
Indonesia 3 (Lessy 18, Boas 21, Ilham 45)
HT: 0-3

Dec 13 - Hanoi
Singapore 6 (Hasrin 7, Indra 19, 74, Thongphachan og 41, Casmir 45, pen 90)
Laos 2 (Phaphouvanin 22, Chalana Luang Amath pen 72)
HT: 3-1. **Ref:** Supian (Mly)

Dec 13 - Hanoi
Indonesia 8 (Ilham 9, 48, 57, Aiboy 30, 55, Kurniawan 72, 74, Ortisan 82)
Cambodia 0
HT: 2-0
Sent off: Ilham (Indonesia) 90min

Dec 15 - Hanoi
Vietnam 3 (Le Cong Vinh 10, Nguyen Minh Phuong 42, Thach Bao Khanh 75)
Laos 0
HT: 2-0

Dec 15 - Haiphong
Cambodia 0
Singapore 3 (Dickson 20, Khaizan 26, Amiri 54)
HT: 0-2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Indonesia	4	3	1	0	17	0	10
Singapore	4	2	2	0	10	3	8
Vietnam	4	2	1	1	13	5	7
Laos	4	1	0	3	4	16	3
Cambodia	4	0	0	4	2	22	0

Group B
In Malaysia (all Kuala Lumpur)

Dec 8
Philippines 0
Myanmar 1 (San Day Thien 90)
HT: 0-0

Dec 8
East Timor 0
Malaysia 5 (Liew Kit Kong 27, Amri 47, 83, Fadzli 67, Shukor 85)
HT: 0-1
Sent off: Dino (East Timor) 74min

Dec 10
Thailand 1 (Therdsak 14)
Myanmar 1 (Zaw Lynn Tun 89)
HT: 1-0

Dec 10
Malaysia 4 (Liew Kit Kong 17, Khalid 67, pen 77, Khaironisam 74)
Philippines 1 (Gould 90)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Napitupulu (Ins)

Dec 12
East Timor 0
Thailand 8 (Banluesak 17, Suriya 41, Weerayoot 53, Therdsak 59, Sarayoot 63, 65, 67, Yuttajak 84)
HT: 0-2

Dec 12
Myanmar 1 (Soe Myat Min 20)
Malaysia 0
HT: 1-0

Dec 14
Philippines 2 (Caligdong 89, 90)
East Timor 1 (Anai 59)
HT: 0-0

Dec 14
Malaysia 2 (Khalid 63, 65)
Thailand 1 (Sarayoot 45)
HT: 0-1
Sent off: Sarayoot (Thailand) 90min

Dec 16
Myanmar 3 (Soe Myat Min 4, San Day Thien 43, Myo Hlaing Win 51)
East Timor 1 (Diamantino pen 16)
HT: 2-1

Dec 16
Thailand 3 (Atthipol 42, Sarif 56, Suriya 89)
Philippines 1 (Caligdong 27)
HT: 1-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Myanmar	4	3	1	0	6	2	10
Malaysia	4	3	0	1	11	3	9
Thailand	4	2	1	1	13	4	7
Philippines	4	1	0	3	4	9	3
East Timor	4	0	0	4	2	18	0

Semi-finals, 1st legs

Dec 29 - Jakarta
Indonesia 1 (Kurniawan 6)
Malaysia 2 (Liew Kit Kong 28, 47)
HT: 1-1

Dec 30 - Kuala Lumpur
Myanmar 3 (Soe Myat Min 34, 90, Min Thu 36)
Singapore 4 (Bennett 20, Casmir 38, Alam Shah 63, Ishak 81)
HT: 2-2

Semi-finals, 2nd legs

Jan 2 - Singapore
Singapore 4 (Zaw Lynn Tun og 74, Alam Shah 94, 96, Casmir 108)
Myanmar 2 (Soe Myat Min 15, Aung Kyaw Moe 50)
Aet. **HT:** 0-1. **90mins:** 1-2
Sent off: Yan Piang 71min, Zaw Lynn Tun 89min, Moe Kyaw Thu 89min (all Myanmar)
Singapore 8-5 on agg

Jan 3 - Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia 1 (Khalid 26)
Indonesia 4 (Kurniawan 59, Yulianto 74, Ilham 77, Boas 84)
HT: 1-0
Indonesia 5-3 on agg

Third-place play-off

Jan 15 - Singapore
Myanmar 1 (Soe Myat Min 52)
Malaysia 2 (Khalid 15, Mohd Nor 56)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Vo (Vie)

Final, 1st leg

Jan 8 - Jakarta
Indonesia 1 (Mahyadi 90)
Singapore 3 (Bennett 5, Amri 39, Casmir 69)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 110,000
Sent off: Mauli (Indonesia) 48min

FIFA WORLD PLAYER OF THE YEAR 2004

VOTE RESULT

FIFA invited every national coach and national team captain to vote for their World Player of the Year, and give a second and third choice; 157 coaches and 145 captains responded*. First choices were awarded five points each, second choices three points and third choices one point.

	PLAYER	1st pl	x5pts	2nd pl	x3pts	3rd pl	x1pt	Total pts
1	Ronaldinho	89	445	47	141	34	34	620
2	Thierry Henry	79	395	42	126	31	31	552
3	Andrii Shevchenko	34	170	19	57	26	26	253
4	Pavel Nedved	12	60	33	99	19	19	178
5	Zinedine Zidane	17	85	15	45	20	20	150
6	Adriano	8	40	15	45	13	13	98
7	Deco	6	30	18	54	12	12	96
	Ronaldo	6	30	17	51	15	15	96
9	Ruud Van Nistelrooy	5	25	10	30	12	12	67
10	Kaka	4	20	11	33	11	11	64
	Wayne Rooney	2	10	12	36	18	18	64
12	Didier Drogba	5	25	5	15	6	6	46
13	Cristiano Ronaldo	5	25	3	9	11	11	45
14	Samuel Eto'o	2	10	6	18	14	14	42
15	Luis Figo	0	0	10	30	5	5	35
	David Beckham	4	20	4	12	3	3	35
17	Raul	2	10	6	18	5	5	33
18	Theo Zagorakis	3	15	2	6	4	4	25
19	Roberto Ayala	3	15	2	6	3	3	24
20	Michael Owen	2	10	4	12	0	0	22
21	Roberto Carlos	2	10	2	6	3	3	19
	Paolo Maldini	2	10	1	3	6	6	19
	Gianluigi Buffon	1	5	4	12	2	2	19
24	Roy Makaay	1	5	4	12	0	0	17
25	Robert Pires	2	10	1	3	2	2	15
26	Frank Lampard	2	10	0	0	3	3	13
27	Cafu	2	10	0	0	0	0	10
28	Michael Ballack	0	0	2	6	3	3	9
	Milan Baros	0	0	2	6	3	3	9
30	Zlatan Ibrahimovic	0	0	1	3	4	4	7
	Henrik Larsson	1	5	0	0	2	2	7
32	Ryan Giggs	1	5	0	0	1	1	6
	Alessandro Nesta	0	0	0	0	6	6	6
34	Steven Gerrard	0	0	1	3	2	2	5
35	Oliver Kahn	0	0	1	3	1	1	4

**One captain and one coach named only their first-choice player*

Final, 2nd leg
Jan 16 - National stadium, Singapore
Singapore 2 (Daud 6, Casmir pen 41)
Indonesia 1 (Aiboy 77)
HT: 2-0
Singapore 5-2 on agg

2005 GOLD CUP QUALIFIERS

CARIBBEAN ZONE
(tournament doubles as the Caribbean Cup)

2nd rnd, 1st legs
Dec 12 - Road Town, Tortola
British Virgin Islands 0
Trinidad & Tobago 4 (N Pierre 7, 65, Jemmot 69, Spann 74)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Arthur (StL)

Dec 12 - Havana
Cuba 2 (Faife 30, Galindo 87)
Martinique 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Campbell (Jam)

Dec 12 - Fort Lauderdale, USA
Haiti 1 (Cadet 62)
St Kitts & Nevis 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** McNab (Bah)

Dec 12 - Vieux Fort
St Lucia 1 (E Joseph 23)
Jamaica 1 (Priestley 42)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Jeanvillier (Mar)

Dec 12 - Kingstown
St Vincent & The Grenadines 3 (S Samuel 10, Guy 23, Velox 64)
Grenada 1 (Rennie 59)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Fanus (StL)

2nd rnd, 2nd legs
Dec 15 - Basseterre
St Kitts & Nevis 0
Haiti 2 (Cadet 16, Dorcelus 70)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Bhimull (T&T)
Haiti 3-0 on agg

Dec 19 - St George's
Grenada 0
St Vincent & The Grenadines 1 (Francis 6)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Small (Bar)
St Vincent & The Grenadines 4-1 on agg

Dec 19 - Kingston
Jamaica 2 (Dean 1, Hue 67)
St Lucia 1 (Elva 23)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Gutierrez (Cub)
Jamaica 3-2 on agg

Dec 19 - Tunapuna
Trinidad & Tobago 2 (N Pierre 21, Eve 61)
British Virgin Islands 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Lancaster (Guy)
Trinidad & Tobago 6-0 on agg

Dec 21 - Fort-de-France
Martinique 0
Cuba 2 (Cervantes 9, More 63)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Gordon (T&T)
Cuba 4-0 on agg

French Guiana received bye to 3rd rnd

3rd rnd, 1st legs
Jan 8 - Kingston
Jamaica 5 (Hue 12, Stewart 56, Shelton 63, Scarlett 75, Bennett 84)
French Guiana 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 6,500. **Ref:** Bynoe (T&T)

Jan 9 - Port-au-Prince
Haiti 0
Cuba 1 (Galindo 51)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Minyetti (Dom)
Sent off: Saintcius (Haiti) 65min

Jan 9 - Marabella
Trinidad & Tobago 3 (Glasgow 51, Fitzpatrick 54, N Pierre 61)
St Vincent & The Grenadines 1 (Haynes 25)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 1,688. **Ref:** Chance (A&B)

EUROPE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A
December 8

Deportivo La Coruna (Spa) 0
Monaco (Fra) 5 (Chevanton 22, Givet 37, Saviola 39, Maicon 55, Adebayor 76)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Baskakov (Rus)
Deportivo: Munua - Hector, Jorge Andrade, Pablo Amo, Capdevila, Scaloni, Duscher (Changui 80), Victor (Luque 63), Fran (Valeron 63), Munitis, Pandiani.
Monaco: Roma - Maicon, Squillaci, Modesto, Givet, Kallon, Bernardi, Zikos, Evra (Perez 61), Chevanton (Farnerud 83), Saviola (Adebayor 70).

Liverpool (Eng) 3 (Sinama-Pongolle 47, Mellor 80, Gerrard 86)
Olympiakos (Gre) 1 (Rivaldo 27)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 42,045. **Ref:** Mejuto Gonzalez (Spa)
Liverpool: Kirkland - Finnan (Josemi 85), Carragher, Hyypia, Traore (Sinama-Pongolle 46), Nunez, Gerrard, Xabi Alonso, Riise, Baros (Mellor 78), Kewell.
Olympiakos: Nikopolidis - Pantos, Anatolakis, Schurrer, Venetidis (Maric 84), Georgiadis (Rezic 71), Kafes, Stoltidis, Djordjevic, Giovanni (Okkas 87), Rivaldo.

GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monaco	6	4	0	2	10	4	12
Liverpool	6	3	1	2	6	3	10
Olympiakos	6	3	1	2	5	5	10
Dep La Coruna	6	0	2	4	0	9	2

Group B
December 8

Bayer Leverkusen (Ger) 3 (Juan 51, Voronin 77, Babic 86)
Kyiv Dynamo (Ukr) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 22,500. **Ref:** Collina (Ita)
Leverkusen: Butt - Juan, Nowotny, Roque Junior, Schneider, Ramelow, Babic, Ponte (Balitsch 74), Freier (Bierofka 82), Berbatov, Voronin.
Dynamo: Shovkovskyi - Ghioane, Rodolfo, Sablic, Diogo Rincon, Gavrancic, El-Kaddouri, Husin (Fedorov 62), Husiev (Cernat 71), Kleber, Verpakovskis (Shatskikh 67).

Roma (Ita) 0
Real Madrid (Spa) 3 (Ronaldo 9, Figo pen 60, 82)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Temmink (Hol)
Match played behind closed doors
Roma: Pelizzoli - Mexes, Ferrari, Dellas, Cufre, Perrotta (De Martino 82), Aquilani, Candela, Mancini, Delvecchio, Corvia.
Real Madrid: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Ivan Helguera, Samuel, Roberto Carlos, Beckham, Guti, Figo (Pavon 83), Raul, Zidane (Celades 86), Ronaldo (Owen 84).

GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
B Leverkusen	6	3	2	1	13	7	11
Real Madrid	6	3	2	1	11	8	11
Kyiv Dynamo	6	3	1	2	11	8	10
Roma	6	0	1	5	4	16	1

Group C
December 8

Ajax (Hol) 2 (Galasek 38, Mitea 64)
Bayern Munich (Ger) 2 (Makaay 9, Ballack 78)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 50,019. **Ref:** Cortez Batista (Por)
Ajax: Vonk - Trabelsi, Grygera (Obodai 75), Escude, Maxwell, De Jong, Sneijder (Van der Vaart 75), Galasek, Rosales, Mitea (Boukhari 72), Babel.
Bayern: Kahn - Kuffour, Kovac, Demichelis, Rau, Hargreaves (Schweinsteiger 74), Frings (Guerrero 46), Ballack, Deisler, Makaay, Pizarro (Ze Roberto 46).

Maccabi Tel Aviv (Isr) 1 (Dego pen 29)
Juventus (Ita) 1 (Del Piero 71)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Sars (Fra)
Maccabi: Nir - Moosa, Mishaelof (Reis 76), Strool, Abo Siam, Zitoni (Mesika 83), T Cohen, Giovanini, L Cohen, Dego, Mbamba (Addo 76).
Juventus: Chimenti - Zebina, Montero, Cannavaro, Pessotto (Zambrotta 69), Nedved, Blasi (Appiah 46), Tacchinardi, Kapo, Del Piero (Ibrahimovic 74), Zalayeta.

GROUP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	6	5	1	0	6	1	16
Bayern Munich	6	3	1	2	12	5	10
Ajax	6	1	1	4	6	10	4
Maccabi TA	6	1	1	4	4	12	4

Group D
December 8

Fenerbahce (Tur) 3 (Tuncay 47, 62, 90)
Manchester United (Eng) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 27,000. **Ref:** Dauden Ibanez (Spa)
Fenerbahce: Rustu - Onder, Fabio Luciano, Servet, Umit, Selcuk, Marco Aurelio, Serkan (Mehmet 72), Tuncay (Fabiano 90), Nobre (Serhat 90), Alex.
Man Utd: Howard - P Neville, Brown (Pique 63), O'Shea, Fortune, Cristiano Ronaldo, Fletcher, Djemba Djemba, Richardson (Spector 69), Miller (Eagles 77), Bellion.

Lyon (Fra) 5 (Essien 7, Nilmar 19, 51, Idangar 83, Bergougnoux 90)
Sparta Prague (Cze) 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 38,571. **Ref:** Plautz (Aut)
Lyon: Puydebois - Reveillere, Diatta, Essien, Berthod (Truchet 81), Bergougnoux, Diarra (Gomez 56), Clement, Malouda (Idangar 69), Nilmar, Frau.
Sparta: Blazek - Petras, Homola, Kovac, Labant (Urbanek 29), Vorisek, Sivok, Poborsky, Zelenka, Simak (Meduna 65), Jun (Pacanda 79).

GROUP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lyon	6	4	1	1	17	8	13
Man Utd	6	3	2	1	14	9	11
Fenerbahce	6	3	0	3	10	13	9
Sparta Prague	6	0	1	5	2	13	1

Group E
December 7

Arsenal (Eng) 5 (Reyes 4, Henry 25, Fabregas 30, Pires pen 41, Van Persie 84)
Rosenborg (Nor) 1 (Hoftun 38)
HT: 4-1. **Att:** 35,421. **Ref:** Farina (Ita)
Arsenal: Almunia - Hoyte, Toure, Campbell, Cole (Van Persie 76), Pires (Owusu-Abeyie 89), Flamini, Fabregas, Reyes, Bergkamp (Clichy 72), Henry.
Rosenborg: E Johnsen - Solli, Hansen, Hoftun, Stensaas, Strand (George 62), Winsnes (Olsen 89), Brattbakk, Braaten, F Johnsen, Helstad (Storflor 78).

Panathinaikos (Gre) 4 (Papadopoulos 30, Munch pen 45, 57, Sanmartean 81)
PSV Eindhoven (Hol) 1 (Beasley 37)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Frojdfeldt (Swe)
Panathinaikos: Galinovic - Vintra, Kyrgiakos, Morris, Munch, Basinas, Maric (Mitu 85), Gonzalez (Goumas 79), Konstantinidis, Papadopoulos, Olisadebe (Sanmartean 73).
PSV: Gomes - Feher (Vonlanthen 64), Alex (Lamey 76), Bouma, Lee, Van Bommel, Vogel, Cocu, Park, Farfan, Beasley.

GROUP E – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	6	2	4	0	11	6	10
PSV	6	3	1	2	6	7	10
Panathinaikos	6	2	3	1	11	8	9
Rosenborg	6	0	2	4	6	13	2

Group F
December 7

Celtic (Sco) 0
Milan (Ita) 0
Att: 59,228. **Ref:** Vassaras (Gre)
Celtic: Hedman - Varga, Balde, Valgaeren (Camara 66), McGeady, Lennon, Petrov (Juninho 77), Thompson, McNamara, Hartson, Sutton.
Milan: Dida - Coloccini, Nesta, Maldini, Costacurta, Brocchi, Ambrosini, Dhorasoo (Kaka 86), Rui Costa (Seedorf 80), Serginho, Shevchenko (Crespo 63).

Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr) 2 (Aghahowa 14, 22)
Barcelona (Spa) 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 25,500. **Ref:** Larsen (Den)
Shakhtar: Lastuvka - Hubschman, Lewandowski, Barcauan, Stoican (Chigrinskyi 90), Duljaj, Matuzalem, Srna (Lalatovic 83), Vukic, Aghahowa, Brandao (Vorobei 46).
Barcelona: Valdes - Belletti (Marquez 59), Puyol (Oleguer 46), Navarro, Van Bronckhorst, Xavi, Silvinho, Messi, Iniesta, Verdu, Peral (Rodri 46).

GROUP F – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Milan	6	4	1	1	10	3	13
Barcelona	6	3	1	2	9	6	10
Shakhtar	6	2	0	4	5	9	6
Celtic	6	1	2	3	4	10	5

Group G
December 7

Internazionale (Ita) 3 (Cruz 32, Martins 60, 63)
Anderlecht (Blg) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Riley (Eng)
Inter: Carini - Ze Maria, Burdisso, Materazzi, Pasquale, Karagounis, C Zanetti (Emre 59), Davids, Martins (Dellafiore 70), Cruz, Recoba.
Anderlecht: Van Steenberghe - Zewlakow, Traore, Kompany, Deschacht (Vanden Borre 31), Wilhelmsson (Lovre 75), Hasi (Gerk 81), Vanderhaeghe, Legear, Baseggio, Dindane.

Valencia (Spa) 0
Werder Bremen (Ger) 2 (Haedo Valdez 83, 90)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 45,000. **Ref:** Frisk (Swe)
Valencia: Canizares - Curro Torres, Caneira, David Navarro, Moretti, Marchena, Angulo, Baraja, Xisco (Vicente 61), Aimar (Di Vaio 61), Mista (Corradi 61). *Sent off: Angulo 90min.*
Werder: Reinke - Pasanen, Ismael, Baumann, Stalteri, Borowski, Ernst, Jensen (Magnin 44), Micoud, Haristeas (Haedo Valdez 81), Klose (Klasnic 90).

GROUP G – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Inter	6	4	2	0	14	3	14
Werder Bremen	6	4	1	1	12	6	13
Valencia	6	2	1	3	6	10	7
Anderlecht	6	0	0	6	4	17	0

Group H
December 7

Paris Saint-Germain (Fra) 1 (Pancrate 37)
CSKA Moscow (Rus) 3 (Semak 28, 64, 70)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 41,987. **Ref:** Merk (Ger)
PSG: Letizi - Pichot (Ljuboja 73), Pierre-Fanfan, Yepes, Arnaud, Coridon (Boskovic 62), Cana, Mbami (Mendy 7), Cisse, Pancrate, Pauleta. *Sent off: Mendy 90min.*
CSKA: Akinfeev - Ignashevich, Semberas, A Berezutsky, Gusev, Aldonin (V Berezutsky 58), Rahimic, Shirkov, Semak, Jarosik (Laizans 90), Vagner Love. *Sent off: Semberas 53min.*

FC Porto (Por) 2 (Diego 61, McCarthy 86)
Chelsea (Eng) 1 (Duff 34)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 42,409. **Ref:** Busacca (Swi)
FC Porto: Nuno - Seitaridis, Jorge Costa, Pedro Emanuel, Areias, Costinha, Maniche, Diego (Cesar Peixoto 78), Luis Fabiano (Helder Postiga 76), McCarthy, Derlei (Ricardo Quaresma 60).
Chelsea: Cech - Paulo Ferreira, Ricardo Carvalho, Terry, Gallas, Smertin (Tiago 66), Parker, Lampard, Bridge, Drogba (Kezman 79), Duff (Robben 55).

GROUP H – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	6	4	1	1	10	3	13
FC Porto	6	2	2	2	4	6	8
CSKA Moscow	6	2	1	3	5	5	7
PSG	6	1	2	3	3	8	5

Top two from each group qualified for knockout stages; third-placed sides entered UEFA Cup

1st knockout round draw
Bayern Munich v Arsenal
Liverpool v Bayer Leverkusen
PSV Eindhoven v Monaco
Real Madrid v Juventus
1st legs - Feb 22; 2nd legs - Mar 9

Barcelona v Chelsea
Manchester United v Milan
FC Porto v Internazionale*
Werder Bremen v Lyon
1st legs - Feb 23; 2nd legs - Mar 8
*(*Inter v Porto 2nd leg - Mar 15)*

Quarter-finals
1st legs - Apr 5/6; 2nd legs - Apr 12/13

Semi-finals
1st legs - Apr 26/27; 2nd legs - May 3/4

Final
May 25 - Olympic stadium, Istanbul

UEFA CUP

Group A

Dec 16: Basle (Swi) 1 (Carignano 53) **Feyenoord (Hol) 0; Hearts (Sco) 0 Ferencvaros (Hun) 1** (Rosa 22).

GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Feyenoord	4	2	1	1	6	3	7
Schalke (Ger)	4	2	1	1	5	3	7
Basle	4	2	1	1	5	4	7
Ferencvaros	4	1	1	2	3	5	4
Hearts	4	1	0	3	2	6	3

Group B

Dec 16: Parma (Ita) 3 (Gilardino 17, Cardone 36, Degano 60) **Besiktas (Tur) 2** (Okan 6, Tumer 89); **Standard Liege (Blg) 1** (Onyewu 15) **Athletic Bilbao (Spa) 7** (Ezquerro 6, 9, 54, Yeste 35, Iraola pen 58, Del Horno 63, Etxeberria 71).

GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Athletic Bilbao	4	3	0	1	11	4	9
Steaua (Rom)	4	2	0	2	4	3	6
Parma	4	2	0	2	5	6	6
Besiktas	4	1	1	2	7	7	4
Standard Liege	4	1	1	2	4	11	4

Group C

Dec 16: Club Brugge (Blg) 1 (Ceh 67) **Zaragoza (Spa) 1** (Savio 39); **Utrecht (Hol) 1** (Douglas 54) **Austria Wien (Aut) 2** (Sionko 14, Rushfeldt 78).

GROUP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dnipro (Ukr)	4	3	0	1	7	5	9
Zaragoza	4	2	1	1	5	3	7
Austria Wien	4	2	1	1	4	3	7
Club Brugge	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
Utrecht	4	0	0	4	2	7	0

Group D

Dec 16: Newcastle (Eng) 1 (Bellamy 5) **Sporting Lisbon (Por) 1** (Custodio 40); **Sochaux (Fra) 1** (Isabey 86) **Panionios (Gre) 0.**

GROUP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Newcastle	4	3	1	0	8	1	10
Sochaux	4	3	0	1	4	4	9
Sporting Lisbon	4	2	1	1	9	3	7
Panionios	4	1	0	3	6	8	3
D Tbilisi (Geo)	4	0	0	4	2	13	0

Group E

Dec 15: Middlesbrough (Eng) 3 (Nemeth 10, Job 22, Morrison 90) **Partizan Belgrade (Ser) 0; Villarreal (Spa) 4** (Hector Font 13, Guayre 39, Javi Venta 52, Cazoria 63) **Aigaleo (Gre) 0.**

GROUP E – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Middlesbrough	4	3	0	1	6	2	9
Villarreal	4	2	2	0	8	2	8
Partizan	4	1	2	1	7	6	5
Lazio (Ita)	4	0	3	1	5	7	3
Aigaleo	4	0	1	3	2	11	1

Group F

Dec 15: Grazer AK (Aut) 2 (Aufhauser 41, Kollmann pen 54) **AZ Alkmaar (Hol) 0; Rangers (Sco) 0 Auxerre (Fra) 2** (Kalou 9, 46).

GROUP F – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AZ	4	3	0	1	6	3	9
Auxerre	4	2	1	1	7	3	7
Grazer AK	4	2	1	1	5	4	7
Rangers	4	2	0	2	8	3	6
Amica W (Pol)	4	0	0	4	3	16	0

Group G

Dec 15: Heerenveen (Hol) 1 (Bruggink 26) **Beveren (Blg) 0; Stuttgart (Ger) 2** (Tiffert 14, Fernando Meira 74) **Dinamo Zagreb (Cro) 1** (Bosnjak 65).

GROUP G – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Stuttgart	4	3	0	1	10	3	9
Benfica (Por)	4	3	0	1	9	5	9
Heerenveen	4	2	1	1	6	6	7
Dinamo Zagreb	4	1	1	2	9	7	4
Beveren	4	0	0	4	2	15	0

Group H

Dec 15: AEK Athens (Gre) 0 Alemannia Aachen (Ger) 2 (Meijer 57, Gomez 84); **Lille (Fra) 1** (Moussilou 77) **Sevilla (Spa) 0.**

GROUP H – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lille	4	3	0	1	5	3	9
Sevilla	4	2	1	1	6	4	7
Alemannia	4	2	1	1	5	4	7
Zenit (Rus)	4	1	2	1	9	6	5
AEK Athens	4	0	0	4	4	12	0

Top three from each group qualified for the knockout stages, together with the third-placed sides from the eight Champions League groups

1st knockout round draw

Grazer AK v Middlesbrough (Game 1)
Heerenveen v Newcastle (2)
Basle v Lille (3)
Parma v Stuttgart (4)
Sporting Lisbon v Feyenoord (5)
Alemannia Aachen v AZ Alkmaar (6)
Austria Wien v Athletic Bilbao (7)
Partizan Belgrade v Dnipro (8)
Valencia v Steaua Bucharest (9)
Ajax v Auxerre (10)
CSKA Moscow v Benfica (11)
Fenerbahce v Zaragoza (12)
Panathinaikos v Sevilla (13)
Shakhtar Donetsk v Schalke (14)
Olympiakos v Sochaux (15)
Kyiv Dynamo v Villarreal (16)
1st legs - Feb 16/17; 2nd legs - Feb 24

2nd knockout round draw

Game 1 winners v Game 5 winners
Game 3 winners v Game 10 winners
Game 7 winners v Game 12 winners
Game 8 winners v Game 11 winners
Game 9 winners v Game 16 winners
Game 13 winners v Game 4 winners
Game 14 winners v Game 6 winners
Game 15 winners v Game 2 winners
1st legs - Mar 10; 2nd legs - Mar 16/17

Quarter-finals

1st legs - Apr 7; 2nd legs - Apr 14

Semi-finals

1st legs - Apr 28; 2nd legs - May 5

Final

May 18 - Jose Alvalade stadium, Lisbon

AUSTRIA

Dec 4: Admira 0 Bregenz 1; Mattersburg 3 Grazer AK 1; Austria Wien 3 Salzburg 1; Sturm Graz 0 Wacker Tirol 0.
Dec 5: Pasching 1 Rapid Wien 1.
Dec 7: Mattersburg 2 Austria Wien 1.
Dec 8: Bregenz 1 Sturm Graz 1; Grazer AK 5 Admira 2; Salzburg 0 Pasching 1; Rapid Wien 2 Wacker Tirol 2.

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rapid Wien	21	12	7	2	39	16	43
Austria Wien	21	12	6	3	42	13	42
Pasching	21	13	2	6	39	29	41
Grazer AK	21	10	4	7	27	21	34
Mattersburg	21	8	4	9	31	36	28
Wacker Tirol	21	7	5	9	32	32	26
Admira	21	6	3	12	23	37	21
Salzburg	21	5	5	11	24	31	20
Sturm Graz	21	5	5	11	17	28	20
Bregenz	21	4	5	12	21	52	17

BELGIUM

Friday, December 3

La Louviere 0
Gent 1 (De Brul 11) Att: 4,000

Mouscron 6 (Noukeu 9, Zewlakow 32, 44, 77, Sanchez D'Avolio 47, Claeys 60)
Cercle Brugge 0 Att: 5,503

Saturday, December 4

Club Brugge 3 (Simons 19, Englebert 61, Verheyen 66)
Mons 1 (Gousse 78) Att: 23,018

Genk 3 (Daerden 46, De Conde 54, Priske 70)
Lierse 0 Att: 21,769

Germinal Beerschot 0
Anderlecht 1 (Dindane 75) Att: 10,500

Westerlo 2 (C Janssens 22, Ntuka Pule 48)
St Truiden 1 (Diawara 19) Att: 4,500

Sunday, December 5

FC Brussels 1 (Emeran 24)
Charleroi 2 (Akgul 32, Kraouche 89) Att: 4,500

Lokeren 1 (Gretarsson pen 72)
Ostende 0 Att: 4,900

Standard 3 (Geraerts 18, Rapajic 70, Bangoura 76)
Beveren 0 Att: 7,000

Saturday, December 11

Anderlecht 2 (Vanderhaeghe 66, Jestrovic 85)
Club Brugge 1 (Ceh 20) Att: 25,693

Beveren 4 (Sanogo 11, 54, 76, Romaric 78)
Westerlo 1 (C Janssens 82) Att: 4,000

Charleroi 2 (Akgul 24, Brogno 43)
Genk 0 Att: 13,443

Lierse 2 (Thompson 15, Wils 20)
Lokeren 0 Att: 7,000

Ostende 2 (Marino 41, Portier 90)
La Louviere 1 (Ishiaku 42) Att: 2,000

St Truiden 1 (Ipoua 88)
Germinal Beerschot 1 (Cruz 71) Att: 6,000

Sunday, December 12

Cercle Brugge 1 (Dekelver 53)
FC Brussels 2 (Culek 25, Omonga 29) Att: 4,000

Gent 1 (Laybutt 33)
Standard 1 (Sergio Conceicao 42) Att: 9,309

Mouscron 5 (Lorenzi 50, Lecomte 57, Noukeu 68, Zewlakow 74, 85)
Mons 1 (Gousse 9) Att: 5,871

Saturday, December 18

FC Brussels 2 (Culek 73, Makasi 90)
Mouscron 1 (Sanchez D'Avolio 80) Att: 5,000

Genk 2 (Haroun 10, Vandenbergh 78)
Cercle Brugge 1 (Roiha 82) Att: 23,495

Lokeren 1 (Doll 11)
Charleroi 1 (Kraouche 6) Att: 6,500

Standard 5 (Bangoura 6, 63, Sergio Conceicao 40, pen 90, J W Curbelo 68)
Ostende 0 Att: 21,500

Westerlo 2 (Paas 60, Mennes 74)
Gent 1 (Matthijs 15) Att: 5,000

Sunday, December 19

Beveren 1 (Sanogo 90)
Germinal Beerschot 0 Att: 7,500

Club Brugge 5 (Verheyen 10, 57, Simons pen 13, Blondel 30, Lange 62)
St Truiden 1 (Buvens 33) Att: 22,557

La Louviere 3 (Murcy 33, 50, Ishiaku 46)
Lierse 2 (Tohoua 11, Solari 85) Att: 4,500

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Club Brugge	17	14	2	1	45	9	44
Anderlecht	16	12	1	3	35	16	37
Charleroi	17	10	3	4	26	19	33
Standard	17	9	3	5	28	20	30
Genk	17	8	6	3	23	17	30
La Louviere	17	9	2	6	28	17	29
Gent	17	9	2	6	26	23	29
Lierse	17	7	3	7	31	28	24
Lokeren	17	6	5	6	18	21	23
Westerlo	17	7	2	8	17	27	23
Beveren	17	6	4	7	23	22	22
Mouscron	17	6	3	8	25	22	21
Germinal B	17	6	2	9	17	16	20
Cercle Brugge	17	6	2	9	26	43	20
St Truiden	17	4	4	9	17	27	16
FC Brussels	17	4	2	11	16	34	14
Ostende	17	1	5	11	15	35	8
Mons	16	1	3	12	14	34	6

LEADING GOALSCORERS

9 Bosko Balaban (Club Brugge)
8 Cadu (Germinal Beerschot)
8 Manaseh Ishiaku (La Louviere)
8 Koffi N'Dri Romaric (Beveren)
8 Marcin Zewlakow (Mouscron)

SUPER CUP

Dec 22
Anderlecht 0
Club Brugge 2 (Hermans 9, Lange 81)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Vereecke

BULGARIA

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CSKA	15	12	3	0	46	9	39
Levski	15	12	3	0	37	8	39
Lok Plovdiv	15	9	3	3	35	14	30
Slavia	15	8	4	3	23	16	28
Lovech	15	8	2	5	28	18	26
Marek	15	5	5	5	17	21	20
Belasitsa	15	5	3	7	11	16	18
Cherno More	15	5	2	8	18	21	17
Vidima-R'vski	15	4	4	7	19	26	16
Naftex	15	4	4	7	13	20	16
Lok Sofia*	15	5	3	7	18	27	15
Rodopa	15	4	3	8	11	22	15
Beroe	15	3	4	8	15	20	13
Nesebar	15	3	4	8	12	27	13
Spartak Varna	15	4	1	10	15	41	13
Pirin	15	2	6	7	12	24	12

**3pts deducted for non-payment of wages*

CROATIA

Dec 4: Pula 1 Kamen Ingrad 0; Medimurje 0 Slaven 1; Zagreb 4 Zadar 1; Inter 1 Osijek 3; Rijeka 3 Varteks 0.
Dec 5: Hajduk 1 Dinamo 0.

CROATIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hajduk	18	11	2	5	32	18	35
Rijeka	18	9	6	3	31	18	33
Varteks	18	10	1	7	37	24	31
Inter	18	9	3	6	22	18	30
Osijek	18	7	7	4	26	26	28
Slaven	18	8	4	6	17	20	28
Dinamo	18	7	6	5	31	23	27
Kamen Ingrad	18	8	2	8	23	21	26
Zagreb	18	7	3	8	22	21	24
Pula	18	4	6	8	16	22	18
Zadar	18	4	1	13	22	45	13
Medimurje	18	2	3	13	14	37	9

CZECH REPUBLIC

Dec 3: Sparta 2 Drnovice 0.
Dec 4: Liberec 1 Slavia 1; Olomouc 1 Slovacko 0; Ostrava 0 Jablonec 0.
Dec 5: Pribram 1 Ceske Budejovice 0; Mlada Boleslav 1 Opava 1; Brno 1 Chmel Blsany 1.
Dec 6: Zlin 2 Teplice 0.

CZECH REPUBLIC

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sparta	16	12	3	1	32	10	39
Teplice	16	8	6	2	16	12	30
Liberec	16	8	5	3	25	9	29
Slavia	16	8	4	4	22	12	28
Jablonec	16	7	5	4	18	14	26
Olomouc	16	8	2	6	17	15	26
Zlin	16	5	6	5	17	19	21
Ostrava	16	4	7	5	18	22	19
Drnovice	16	4	5	7	17	20	17
Brno	16	4	4	8	12	23	16
Chmel Blsany	16	4	4	8	11	22	16
Mlada Boleslav	16	3	6	7	15	20	15
Pribram	16	4	3	9	15	29	15
C Budejovice	16	2	5	9	14	20	11
Slovacko*	16	5	7	4	13	10	10
Opava*	16	3	6	7	17	22	9

**Slovacko and Opava had 12pts and 6pts deducted respectively for their part in a bribery scandal*

DENMARK

DENMARK	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brondby	18	13	4	1	31	10	43
Midtjylland	18	10	3	5	29	24	33
OB	18	9	3	6	42	23	30
Viborg	18	7	6	5	21	18	27
FC Copenhagen	18	7	6	5	29	27	27
AGF	18	7	5	6	31	31	26
AaB	18	7	4	7	28	25	25
Esbjerg	18	6	5	7	35	31	23
Silkeborg	18	6	3	9	28	33	21
Nordsjaelland	18	4	4	10	22	37	16
Randers	18	3	5	10	20	34	14
Herfolge	18	4	2	12	15	38	14

ENGLAND

Saturday, December 4

Arsenal 3 (Pires 32, Henry 80, 86)
Birmingham 0 Att: 38,064

Aston Villa 1 (Solano 44)
Liverpool 1 (Kewell 13) Att: 42,593

Blackburn 0
Tottenham 1 (Keane 56) Att: 22,182

Chelsea 4 (Lampard 63, Drogba 69, Robben 89, Kezman pen 90)
Newcastle 0 Att: 42,328

Everton 3 (Ferguson 45, Gravesen 75, Jaidi og 85)
Bolton 2 (Davies 16, 59) Att: 35,929

Manchester Utd 3 (Scholes 53, Rooney 58, Cristiano Ronaldo 87)
Southampton 0 Att: 67,921

Norwich 0
Fulham 1 (Cole 7) Att: 23,755

Portsmouth 3 (Purse og 35, De Zeeuw 85, Lua Lua 89)
West Bromwich 2 (Stefanovic og 14, Earnshaw 45) Att: 20,110

Sunday, December 5

Crystal Palace 0
Charlton 1 (Rommedahl 90) Att: 20,705

Monday, December 6

Middlesbrough 3 (Viduka 9, 54, Hasselbaink 65)
Manchester City 2 (Fowler 39, B Wright-Phillips 80) Att: 29,787

Saturday, December 11

Crystal Palace 0
Blackburn 0 Att: 22,010

Everton 1 (Carsley 68)
Liverpool 0 Att: 40,552

Manchester City 0
Tottenham 1 (Kanoute 56) Att: 45,805

Newcastle 1 (Bowyer 3)
Portsmouth 1 (Stone 30) Att: 51,480

Norwich 3 (Svensson 20, 84, Huckerby pen 69)
Bolton 2 (Okocha pen 19, Hierro 23) Att: 23,549

Southampton 2 (Phillips 45, Crouch 64)
Middlesbrough 2 (Higginbotham og 88, Downing 90) Att: 29,018

West Bromwich 0
Charlton 1 (Holland 30) Att: 24,697

Sunday, December 12

Arsenal 2 (Henry 2, 29)
Chelsea 2 (Terry 17, Gudjohnsen 46) Att: 38,153

Aston Villa 1 (Barry 90)
Birmingham 2 (Morrison 9, Dunn 18) Att: 41,329

Monday, December 13

Fulham 1 (Diop 87)
Manchester United 1 (Smith 33) Att: 21,940

Tuesday, December 14

Liverpool 1 (Gerrard 70)
Portsmouth 1 (Lua Lua 90) Att: 35,064

Saturday, December 18

Birmingham 4 (Savage pen 4, Morrison 23, Heskey 30, Anderton 80)
West Bromwich 0 Att: 28,880

Blackburn 0
Everton 0 Att: 25,191

Bolton 0
Manchester City 1 (Barton 52) Att: 27,274

Chelsea 4 (Duff 10, Lampard 34, Robben 44, Drogba 84)
Norwich 0 Att: 42,071

Manchester Utd 5 (Scholes 22, 49, Smith 35, Boyce og 48, O'Shea 90)
Crystal Palace 2 (Granville 27, Kolkka 46) Att: 67,814

Middlesbrough 3 (Hasselbaink 20, Job 68, Reiziger 88)
Aston Villa 0 Att: 31,338

Tottenham 5 (Defoe 8, 27, 61, Kanoute 44, Keane 88)
Southampton 1 (Crouch 47) Att: 36,054

Sunday, December 19

Liverpool 3 (Bramble og 35, Mellor 38, Baros 61)
Newcastle 1 (Kluivert 32) Att: 43,856

Portsmouth 0
Arsenal 1 (Campbell 75) Att: 20,170

Monday, December 20

Charlton 2 (Thomas 27, El-Karkouri 66)
Fulham 1 (Radzinski 82) Att: 26,108

Sunday, December 26

Arsenal 2 (Henry 12, Pires 71)
Fulham 0 Att: 38,074

Birmingham 2 (Morrison 10, Heskey 45)
Middlesbrough 0 Att: 29,082

Blackburn 2 (Dickov 26, Todd 54)
Newcastle 2 (Dyer 6, Robert 34) Att: 29,271

Chelsea 1 (Duff 30)
Aston Villa 0 Att: 41,950

Crystal Palace 0
Portsmouth 1 (Primus 69) Att: 25,238

Everton 2 (Cahill 22, Bent 63)
Manchester City 1 (Fowler 42) Att: 40,530

Manchester Utd 2 (Giggs 10, Scholes 89)
Bolton 0 Att: 67,867

Norwich 0
Tottenham 2 (Keane 73, Brown 77) Att: 24,508

Southampton 0
Charlton 0 Att: 31,195

West Bromwich 0
Liverpool 5 (Riise 17, 82, Sinama-Pongolle 51, Gerrard 55, Luis Garcia 89) Att: 27,533

Tuesday, December 28

Aston Villa 0
Manchester Utd 1 (Giggs 41) Att: 42,593

Bolton 0
Blackburn 1 (Dickov 6) Att: 27,038

Charlton 2 (El-Karkouri 82, Hreidarsson 85)
Everton 0 Att: 27,001

Fulham 2 (Legwinski 34, Radzinski 90)
Birmingham 3 (Heskey 25, Carter 41, Savage 53) Att: 18,706

Liverpool 1 (Sinama-Pongolle 44)
Southampton 0 Att: 42,382

Manchester City 1 (Anelka 32)
West Bromwich 1 (Dunne og 85) Att: 47,177

Middlesbrough 2 (Job 52, 54)
Norwich 0 Att: 34,836

Portsmouth 0
Chelsea 2 (Robben 79, J Cole 90) Att: 20,210

Tottenham 1 (Defoe 54)
Crystal Palace 1 (Johnson 79) Att: 36,100

Wednesday, December 29

Newcastle 0
Arsenal 1 (Vieira 45) Att: 52,320

Saturday, January 1

Aston Villa 1 (Solano 88)
Blackburn 0 Att: 34,265

Bolton 1 (Diouf 85)
West Bromwich 1 (Gera 13) Att: 25,205

Charlton 1 (El-Karkouri 45)
Arsenal 3 (Ljungberg 35, 48, Van Persie 67) Att: 26,711

Fulham 3 (Cole 4, 60, Radzinski 73)
Crystal Palace 1 (Johnson pen 35) Att: 18,680

Liverpool 0
Chelsea 1 (J Cole 80) Att: 43,866

Manchester City 2 (Bosvelt 19, S Wright-Phillips 40)
Southampton 1 (Phillips pen 90) Att: 42,895

Middlesbrough 0
Manchester Utd 2 (Fletcher 9, Giggs 79) Att: 34,199

Newcastle 2 (Ameobi 6, Bowyer 44)
Birmingham 1 (Heskey 64) Att: 52,222

Portsmouth 1 (Aiyegbeni pen 61)
Norwich 1 (Francis 9) Att: 20,015

Tottenham 5 (Marney 16, 80, Ziegler 27, Pedro Mendes 59, Keane 68)
Everton 2 (Cahill 40, McFadden 87) Att: 36,102

Monday, January 3

Blackburn 1 (Emerton 41)
Charlton 0 Att: 19,819

Crystal Palace 2 (Johnson pen 33, 66)
Aston Villa 0 Att: 24,140

Norwich 1 (Jarvis 88)
Liverpool 2 (Luis Garcia 58, Riise 63) Att: 24,503

West Bromwich 0
Newcastle 0 Att: 25,259

Tuesday, January 4

Arsenal 1 (Ljungberg 75)
Manchester City 1 (S Wright-Phillips 31) Att: 38,086

Birmingham 1 (Upson 66)
Bolton 2 (Diouf 17, Nolan 90) Att: 27,177

Chelsea 2 (Drogba 15, 17)
Middlesbrough 0 Att: 40,982

Everton 2 (Stubbs 29, Osman 90)
Portsmouth 1 (Aiyegbeni 31) Att: 35,480

Manchester Utd 0
Tottenham 0 Att: 67,962

Wednesday, January 5

Southampton 3 (Phillips 21, 29, Rosenior og 71)
Fulham 3 (Diop 20, Malbranque 43, Radzinski 50) Att: 27,343

ENGLAND	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	22	17	4	1	43	8	55
Arsenal	22	14	6	2	52	24	48
Man Utd	22	12	8	2	33	13	44
Everton	22	13	4	5	27	23	43
Liverpool	22	11	4	7	36	22	37
Middlesbrough	22	10	5	7	34	28	35
Tottenham	22	9	6	7	29	21	33
Charlton	22	9	4	9	24	32	31
Man City	22	7	7	8	27	23	28
Aston Villa	22	7	7	8	23	26	28
Bolton	22	7	6	9	29	31	27
Portsmouth	22	7	6	9	26	30	27
Birmingham	22	6	8	8	25	25	26
Newcastle	22	6	8	8	33	39	26
Fulham	22	6	4	12	28	39	22
Blackburn	22	4	10	8	20	33	22
Crystal Palace	22	4	6	12	23	34	18
Norwich	22	2	10	10	19	39	16
Southampton	22	2	9	11	22	37	15
West Brom	22	1	10	11	17	43	13

LEADING GOALSCORERS

16 Thierry Henry (Arsenal)
13 Andy Johnson (Crystal Palace)
10 Jermain Defoe (Tottenham)
10 Robert Pires (Arsenal)

ESM
EUROPEAN SPORTS MAGAZINES
GOLDEN SHOE

ESM GOLDEN SHOE STANDINGS AT 09.01.05

POS	NAME	TEAM	GOALS	FACTOR	PTS
1	Thierry Henry	Arsenal (Eng)	16	2	32
2	Tomasz Frankowski	Wisla Krakow (Pol)	19	1.5	28.5
	Frode Johnsen	Rosenborg (Nor)	19	1.5	28.5
4	Adriano	Internazionale (Ita)	14	2	28
	Vincenzo Montella	Roma (Ita)	14	2	28
	Vjatseslav Zahhovaiko	Flora Tallinn (Est)	28	1	28
7	Alexander Kerzhakov	Zenit St Petersburg (Rus)	18	1.5	27
8	Samuel Eto'o	Barcelona (Spa)	13	2	26
	Andy Johnson	Crystal Palace (Eng)	13	2	26
	Marek Mintal	Nurnberg (Ger)	13	2	26
11	Andrei Karyaka	Kryliya Sovetov (Rus)	17	1.5	25.5
12	Jason Byrne	Shelbourne (Ire)	25	1	25
13	John Hartson	Celtic (Sco)	16	1.5	24
	Andrii Shevchenko	Milan (Ita)	12	2	24

For the latest standings, updated weekly, visit www.worldsoccer.com

FA CUP – 3rd rnd (last 64)

Jan 8: Birmingham 3 Leeds 0; Bournemouth 2 Chester 1; Cardiff 1 Blackburn 1; Charlton 4 Rochdale 1; Chelsea 3 Scunthorpe 1; Coventry 3 Crewe 0; Derby 2 Wigan 1; Hartlepool 0 Boston 0; Hull 0 Colchester 2; Ipswich 1 Bolton 3; Leicester 2 Blackpool 2; Luton 0 Brentford 2; Manchester Utd 0 Exeter 0; MK Dons 0 Peterborough 2; Northampton 1 Southampton 3; Notts County 1 Middlesbrough 2; Oldham 1 Manchester City 0; Plymouth 1 Everton 3; Portsmouth 1 Gillingham 0; Preston 0 West Bromwich 2; Queen's Park Rangers 0 Nottingham Forest 3; Reading 1 Swansea 1; Rotherham 0 Yeovil 3; Sheffield Utd 3 Aston Villa 1; Sunderland 2 Crystal Palace 1; Tottenham 2 Brighton 1; Watford 1 Fulham 1; West Ham 1 Norwich 0; Wolves 2 Millwall 0.
Jan 9: Arsenal 2 Stoke 1; Yeading 0 Newcastle 2.

Still to play: Burnley v Liverpool.

FRANCE

Friday, December 3
Monaco 2 (Kallon 29, Chevanton 31)
Rennes 0 Att: 8,089

Saturday, December 4
Ajaccio 1 (Waldir Lucas Pereira 90)
Lyon 1 (Juninho 88) Att: 2,792

Caen 2 (Dufer 43, Watier pen 82)
Marseille 3 (Bamogo 25, pen 48, Koke 67) Att: 20,972

Istres 1 (N'Diaye 77)
Bastia 0 Att: 5,027

Lens 2 (Utaka 36, Keita 68)
Metz 0 Att: 36,520

Nantes 0
Nice 1 (Balmont 29) Att: 29,706

Paris SG 1 (Reinaldo 34)
Lille 1 (Bodmer 17) Att: 36,940

Saint-Etienne 0
Toulouse 0 Att: 27,893

Strasbourg 0
Sochaux 0 Att: 20,794

Sunday, December 5
Auxerre 0
Bordeaux 0 Att: 15,000

Saturday, December 11
Bastia 0
Monaco 2 (Chevanton 19, Saviola 45) Att: 4,618

Bordeaux 0
Lyon 0 Att: 31,832

Lille 2 (Dernis 50, Moussilou 52)
Nantes 1 (N'Zigou 33) Att: 13,856

Marseille 0
Auxerre 1 (Mwaruwari 62) Att: 52,452

Metz 1 (Renouard 44)
Strasbourg 0 Att: 15,452

Nice 3 (Vahirua pen 45, 90, Grenet 82)
Ajaccio 0 Att: 10,000

Rennes 3 (Maoulida 17, 76, Monterrubio 61)
Lens 1 (Leroy 41) Att: 23,179

Saint-Etienne 5 (Piquionne 3, 45, Hellebuyk 31, Mendy 35, Compan 86)
Caen 0 Att: 24,135

Toulouse 2 (Emana 26, Giresse 61)
Istres 1 (Courtois 34) Att: 27,351

Sunday, December 12
Sochaux 1 (Santos 75)
Paris SG 2 (Pauleta 24, 42) Att: 20,000

Friday, December 17
Lyon 1 (Govou 39)
Marseille 1 (Luyindula 3) Att: 38,728

Saturday, December 18
Ajaccio 0
Lille 0 Att: 3,800

Auxerre 4 (Bolf 45, Mwaruwari 56, 62, Kalou 59)
Nice 3 (Traore 48, Vahirua pen 57, Echouafni 62) Att: 7,000

Caen 0
Toulouse 2 (Psaume 28, Moreira 58) Att: 18,618

Istres 0
Saint-Etienne 2 (Sable 32, Mendy 45) Att: 12,000

Lens 2 (Cousin 35, 69)
Bastia 1 (Vairelles 82) Att: 34,186

Monaco 1 (Kallon 42)
Bordeaux 1 (Darcheville 8) Att: 13,000

Paris SG 3 (Meniri og 39, Pauleta pen 61, Pancrate 75)
Metz 0 Att: 36,881

Strasbourg 1 (Kante 15)
Rennes 0 Att: 22,748

Sunday, December 19
Nantes 2 (Savinaud 20, Fae 87)
Sochaux 2 (Ilan 27, 45) Att: 30,000

Tuesday, January 11
Lille 1 (Brunel pen 53)
Marseille 2 (Marlet 3, Nasri 22) Att: 16,388

Wednesday, January 12
Bastia 0
Nantes 0 Att: 3,770

Caen 0
Paris SG 0 Att: 20,930

Istres 0
Monaco 1 (Camara 16) Att: 6,390

Metz 1 (Proment 84)
Ajaccio 0 Att: 12,056

Nice 3 (Traore 35, Vahirua 45, pen 90)
Bordeaux 3 (Cid 45, Francia 55, Chamakh 63) Att: 10,321

Rennes 1 (Kalou og 61)
Auxerre 0 Att: 19,334

Saint-Etienne 0
Lens 0 Att: 27,300

Sochaux 0
Lyon 2 (Bergougnoux 6, Diarra 41) Att: 17,249

Toulouse 2 (Psaume 21, Eduardo 90)
Strasbourg 0 Att: 17,996

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lyon	20	11	9	0	25	8	42
Lille	20	10	6	4	24	13	36
Monaco	20	8	9	3	25	18	33
Auxerre	20	9	5	6	26	20	32
Marseille	20	9	5	6	24	19	32
Toulouse	20	8	7	5	23	17	31
Bordeaux	20	5	13	2	24	13	28
Saint-Etienne	20	6	9	5	26	19	27
Sochaux	20	7	6	7	24	21	27
Paris SG	20	6	9	5	23	22	27
Nice	20	6	8	6	27	28	26
Rennes	20	7	5	8	20	23	26
Metz	20	6	8	6	18	26	26
Lens	20	5	10	5	21	20	25
Caen	20	4	8	8	15	30	20
Nantes	20	4	7	9	16	22	19
Strasbourg	20	4	7	9	18	27	19
Bastia	20	4	6	10	14	25	18
Ajaccio	20	2	10	8	16	24	16
Istres	20	1	9	10	10	24	12

LEADING GOALSCORERS
9 Pauleta (Paris SG)
8 Alexander Frei (Rennes)
8 Araujo Ilan (Sochaux)
8 Mohamed Kallon (Monaco)
8 Marama Vahirua (Nice)

FRENCH CUP – last 64

Jan 7: Chateauroux 2 Grenoble 3 (aet); Lille 2 Le Mans 1; Nancy 1 Ajaccio 1 (aet; Ajaccio 5-4 on pens); Rennes 1 Brest 0 (aet); Sedan 3 Strasbourg 1.
Jan 8: Beauvais 0 Nice 4; Bordeaux 2 Istres 0; Boulogne-sur-Mer 1 Avranches 0 (aet); Calais 0 Auxerre 1; Cournon 0 Nantes 3; Epinal 0 Blois 1 (aet); Gambsheim 0 Toulouse 3; La Fleche 1 Libourne/Saint-Seurin 2; Langueux 1 Paris SG 6; Marseille 2 Angers 3; Montagnarde 2 Pontivy 0; Mulhouse 0 Caen 2; Quevilly 1 Guingamp 0; Rhone-Vallee 0 Menton 0 (aet; Rhone-Vallee 3-1 on pens); Rodez 1 Metz 2; Saint-Dizier 0 Lens 4; Saumur 2 Paris FC 2 (aet; Saumur 4-3 on pens); Schiltigheim 0 Reims 2; Seyssinet-Pariset 0 Monaco 7; Sochaux 1 Bastia 0; Tarbes 0 Vannes 3 (aet); Toulon 3 Montceau 0; Troyes 1 Albi 3; Vesoul 1 Clermont Foot 1 (aet; Clermont 6-5 on pens); Viry-Chatillon 0 Lyon 2.
Jan 9: Haguenau 1 Romorantin 2; Nimes 3 Saint-Etienne 2.

GERMANY

Saturday, December 4
Arminia Bielefeld 1 (Owomoyela 64)
Hansa Rostock 1 (Di Salvo 52) Att: 21,337

Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Voronin 46, Franca 89)
Wolfsburg 1 (Klimowicz 4) Att: 22,500

Freiburg 0
Werder Bremen 6 (Klose 20, 23, Haristeas 29, 58, 87, Micoud 63) Att: 24,500

Hamburg 0
Hannover 2 (Cherundolo 19, Stendel 59) Att: 50,454

Hertha 6 (Reina 38, Rafael 54, Madlung 63, Basturk 71, 78, Marcelinho 81)
Monchengladbach 0 Att: 40,094

Nurnberg 2 (Mintal 23, Banovic pen 74)
Bayern Munich 2 (Makaay pen 26, Ze Roberto 60) Att: 44,359

Stuttgart 5 (Kalla og 5, Kuranyi 23, 81, Hleb 68, Meissner 74)
Bochum 2 (Edu 33, Maltritz 59) Att: 35,000

Sunday, December 5
Borussia Dortmund 0
Schalke 1 (Ailton 17) Att: 83,000

Kaiserslautern 2 (Abel og 20, Kosowksi 59)
Mainz 0 Att: 46,115

Saturday, December 11
Bayern Munich 2 (Pizarro 66, Guerrero 89)
Stuttgart 2 (Meissner 29, Kuranyi 64) Att: 63,000

Bochum 1 (Bechman 83)
Hamburg 2 (Barbarez 26, Benjamin 33) Att: 28,000

Hannover 0
Hertha 1 (Rafael 54) Att: 43,096

Hansa Rostock 1 (Allback 32)
Borussia Dortmund 1 (Kehl 40) Att: 21,800

Mainz 0
Nurnberg 1 (Schroth 10) Att: 20,300

Schalke 1 (Krstajic 24)
Freiburg 1 (Antar 86) Att: 60,433

Werder Bremen 1 (Borowski 59)
Kaiserslautern 1 (Jancker 49) Att: 39,398

Sunday, December 12
Monchengladbach 1 (Sverkos pen 69)
Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Berbatov 58) Att: 52,221

Wolfsburg 5 (Rytter 14, Klimowicz 26, Brdaric 37, 40, pen 67)
Arminia Bielefeld 0 Att: 24,013

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern Munich	17	10	4	3	33	20	34
Schalke	17	11	1	5	26	21	34
Stuttgart	17	9	4	4	32	19	31
Wolfsburg	17	10	0	7	32	26	30
Werder Bremen	17	8	4	5	36	19	28
Hertha	17	7	7	3	28	15	28
Hannover	17	8	4	5	24	16	28
B Leverkusen	17	7	5	5	28	25	26
Hamburg	17	8	1	8	30	25	25
A Bielefeld	17	7	3	7	19	23	24
Mainz	17	6	4	7	24	27	22
Nurnberg	17	5	6	6	28	26	21
Kaiserslautern	17	6	3	8	22	26	21
B Dortmund	17	4	6	7	17	22	18
M'gladbach	17	4	5	8	20	30	17
Bochum	17	3	5	9	23	35	14
Hansa Rostock	17	2	5	10	13	36	11
Freiburg	17	2	5	10	14	38	11

LEADING GOALSCORERS
13 Marek Mintal (Nurnberg)
10 Delron Buckley (Arminia Bielefeld)
10 Miroslav Klose (Werder Bremen)

GREECE

Dec 4: Kerkira 1 Iraklis 2; Olympiakos 1 Panathinaikos 0.
Dec 5: Panionios 0 Xanthi 0; PAOK 1 AEK 1; Halkidona 2 OFI 3; Ergotelis 2 Ionikos 3; Kalamaria 0 Aris 1; Aigaleo 1 Kallithea 2.
Dec 11: Xanthi 1 AEK 1; Aris 0 Aigaleo 0; Iraklis 0 Panionios 1.
Dec 12: Kallithea 1 Kerkira 2; OFI 2 PAOK 2; Ionikos 0 Halkidona 0; Panathinaikos 1 Ergotelis 0; Olympiakos 2 Kalamaria 0.
Dec 18: Kerkira 0 Aris 0.
Dec 19: AEK 1 OFI 1; Aigaleo 2 Olympiakos 2; Halkidona 0 Panathinaikos 2; Ergotelis 4 Kalamaria 1; Iraklis 1 Xanthi 1; PAOK 3 Ionikos 0; Panionios 1 Kallithea 1.
Dec 29: Kalamaria 0 Halkidona 2; Aris 1 Panionios 0; Ergotelis 2 Aigaleo 1; Ionikos 2 AEK 3; Kallithea 2 Iraklis 1; Olympiakos 3 Kerkira 0; Panathinaikos 2 PAOK 1; Xanthi 2 OFI 1.
Jan 8: Halkidona 1 Aigaleo 1; Kallithea 2 Xanthi 3.
Jan 9: AEK 1 Panathinaikos 0; Iraklis 0 Aris 0; Kerkira 0 Ergotelis 1; OFI 2 Ionikos 0; PAOK 5 Kalamaria 2.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AEK	14	8	6	0	21	9	30
Panathinaikos	14	9	2	3	22	7	29
Olympiakos*	13	9	3	1	27	7	27
Xanthi	14	6	5	3	20	17	23
OFI	14	5	4	5	21	18	19
Halkidona	14	5	4	5	16	15	19
PAOK	14	5	4	5	20	21	19
Aigaleo	14	3	9	2	12	11	18
Kallithea	14	4	4	6	20	22	16
Iraklis	14	4	3	7	13	18	15
Ionikos	14	4	3	7	10	19	15
Aris	14	2	8	4	10	14	14
Ergotelis	14	4	2	8	13	23	14
Panionios*	13	4	4	5	8	12	13
Kerkira	14	3	3	8	10	18	12
Apollon	14	2	4	8	10	22	10

**Olympiakos and Panionios both had 3pts deducted because of the crowd violence before their round 14 game which caused it to be called off*

HOLLAND

Friday, December 3
RKC 1 (Fuchs 7)
Ajax 2 (Sneijder 11, Rosales 36) Att: 7,200

Saturday, December 4
De Graafschap 0
PSV 4 (Alex 20, Van Bommel pen 66, Farfan 77, 82) Att: 11,500

RBC 0
NAC 0 Att: 5,000

Roda JC 5 (Cristiano 15, Van Dijk pen 25, Bodnar 38, 52, Colinet 60)
Groningen 1 (Van Gessel 79) Att: 13,000

Twente 4 (Culina 16, N'Kufo 28, Shoukov 54, Touzani 61)
Den Bosch 0 Att: 13,000

Sunday, December 5
AZ 2 (Meerdink 18, El Khattabi 73)
Den Haag 0 Att: 7,744

Feyenoord 2 (Kuijt 19, Kalou 85)
NEC 1 (Barreto 43) Att: 34,000

Vitesse 2 (Hofs 16, Jansen 90)
Utrecht 1 (Douglas 85) Att: 16,389

Willem II 2 (Caluwe 30, Van Nieuwstadt 90)
Heerenveen 2 (Sikora 6, Huntelaar 67) Att: 12,300

Friday, December 10
Heerenveen 1 (Vayrynen 66)
Groningen 0 Att: 17,664

Saturday, December 11
AZ 5 (Meerdink 7, Touzani og 38, Perez 59, 87, Landzaat pen 67)
Twente 0 Att: 8,940

Den Bosch 0
RKC 2 (Hoogendorp 31, Janssen 85) Att: 5,937

Roda JC 3 (Cristiano 18, Kone 25, Sergio 82)
RBC 1 (Hertog 31) Att: 12,300

Willem II 0
Utrecht 0 Att: 12,600

Sunday, December 12
Ajax 1 (Babel 88)
Vitesse 0 Att: 49,814

De Graafschap 3 (Magno 14, Van Leerdam 41, De Graef 65)
NEC 2 (Tininho 13, Denneboom 57) Att: 11,500

Feyenoord 3 (Kalou 49, Ono 82, Goor 90)
PSV 3 (Cocu 6, Farfan 24, Beasley 70) Att: 45,000

NAC 1 (Boussaboun 70)
Den Haag 1 (Swerts 85) Att: 11,700

Thursday, December 16
Vitesse 3 (Schaars 54, 59, Amoah 78)
De Graafschap 1 (Magno 1) Att: 20,213

Friday, December 17
Twente 0
NAC 0 Att: 13,460

Saturday, December 18
PSV 0
Roda JC 2 (Bodnar 44, Sergio 80) Att: 31,300

RBC 0
AZ 2 (Nelisse 24, Landzaat 62) Att: 5,000

RKC 1 (Hoogendorp 76)
Willem II 0 Att: 5,800

Sunday, December 19
Den Haag 2 (Den Ouden 2, Polak 64)
Feyenoord 0 Att: 8,243

Groningen 0
Ajax 4 (Sneijder 58, Mitea 64, Babel 74, 78) Att: 12,500

NEC 3 (Wielart pen 3, Denneboom 46, Seip og 74)
Heerenveen 2 (Hestad 16, Vayrynen 90) Att: 12,000

Utrecht 1 (Van de Haar 56)
Den Bosch 0 Att: 18,500

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AZ	17	13	3	1	44	12	42
PSV	17	13	3	1	42	10	42
Ajax	17	11	4	2	41	17	37
Feyenoord	17	9	4	4	42	23	31
Utrecht	17	8	4	5	23	19	28
Heerenveen	17	8	4	5	30	28	28
Vitesse	17	8	3	6	28	23	27
Roda JC	17	7	5	5	32	26	26
NAC	17	7	5	5	27	33	26
Willem II	17	6	4	7	22	25	22
RKC	17	5	6	6	21	23	21
Groningen	17	5	4	8	24	33	19
Twente	17	5	3	9	19	25	18
NEC	17	4	5	8	20	24	17
Den Haag	17	4	3	10	21	28	15
Den Bosch	17	2	3	12	10	43	9
De Graafschap	17	1	5	11	17	43	8
RBC	17	2	2	13	17	45	8

LEADING GOALSCORERS
13 Dirk Kuijt (Feyenoord)
11 Salomon Kalou (Feyenoord)
10 Klaas Jan Huntelaar (Heerenveen)
10 Kenneth Perez (AZ)

HUNGARY

HUNGARY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ferencvaros	15	11	2	2	39	12	35
Debrecen	15	10	2	3	27	12	32
Zalaegerszeg	15	8	3	4	26	20	27
Ujpest	15	7	5	3	27	18	26
MTK*	15	7	4	4	22	15	24
Gyor	15	7	3	5	19	16	24
Videoton	15	6	5	4	23	14	23
Honved	15	6	2	7	24	33	20
Matav	15	5	4	6	20	25	19
Kaposvar	15	5	3	7	18	27	18
Vasas	15	5	1	9	21	23	16
Pecs	15	4	4	7	16	21	16
Papa	15	4	3	8	21	24	15
Diosgyor	15	4	1	10	15	28	13
Bekescsaba	15	3	4	8	14	31	13
Nyiregyhaza	15	2	6	7	18	31	12

**1pt deducted for non-payment of wages to a former coach*

ITALY

Saturday, December 4
Inter 5 (Adriano 3, 14, 36, Eleftheropoulos og 55, Vieri 84)
Messina 0 Att: 55,509

Parma 1 (Gilardino 67)
Milan 2 (Kaka 82, Pirlo 90) Att: 19,967

Sunday, December 5
Cagliari 4 (Zola 33, pen 39, Langella 45, Abeijon 60)
Chievo 2 (Pellissier 58, Amauri 87) Att: 10,000

Fiorentina 1 (Maresca 62)
Bologna 0 Att: 28,130

Juventus 2 (Olivera 40, Ibrahimovic 75)
Lazio 1 (Pandev 11) Att: 20,787

Lecce 3 (Rullo 39, Dalla Bona pen 57, Giacomazzi 60)
Livorno 2 (Vigiani 30, Danilevicius 40) Att: 11,414

Palermo 1 (Brienza 44)
Atalanta 0 Att: 33,047

Reggina 1 (Zamboni 74)
Brescia 3 (Stankevicius 18, Martinez 40, Caracciolo 80) Att: 15,060

Roma 1 (Totti pen 84)
Sampdoria 1 (Pagano 81) Att: 43,887

Udinese 1 (Di Natale 16)
Siena 0 Att: 13,374

Saturday, December 11
Atalanta 0
Udinese 1 (Iaquinta 8) Att: 11,766

Lazio 3 (Rocchi 51, Di Canio pen 68, 77)
Lecce 3 (Babu 9, 75, Bojinov 32) Att: 33,707

Sunday, December 12
Bologna 0
Juventus 1 (Nedved 86) Att: 28,458

Brescia 0
Roma 1 (Mancini pen 90) Att: 7,539

Chievo 2 (Cossato 8, Luciano 38)
Palermo 1 (Toni 89) Att: 8,457

Livorno 2 (C Lucarelli 39, 89)
Parma 0 Att: 13,463

Milan 6 (Seedorf 16, 82, Crespo 22, 61, Shevchenko 52, 73)
Fiorentina 0 Att: 69,226

Reggina 3 (Paredes 8, De Rosa 52, 76)
Cagliari 2 (Langella 6, Esposito 72) Att: 15,054

Sampdoria 1 (Flachi 16)
Messina 0 Att: 21,134

Siena 2 (Portanova 41, Flo 86)
Inter 2 (Adriano pen 36, Vieri 90) Att: 18,581

Saturday, December 18
Juventus 0
Milan 0 Att: 54,181

Messina 1 (Di Napoli 9)
Atalanta 0 Att: 14,780
Game abandoned after 23 minutes because of waterlogged pitch

Sunday, December 19
Bologna 2 (Bellucci pen 5, Meghni 63)
Reggina 0 Att: 14,500

Fiorentina 2 (Rigano 45, Portillo 70)
Chievo 0 Att: 22,500

Inter 1 (Mihajlovic 24)
Brescia 0 Att: 50,457

Lecce 1 (Vucinic 53)
Sampdoria 4 (Flachi pen 38, 50, Tonetto 60, Kutuzov 90) Att: 18,750

Palermo 3 (Zauli 33, Brienza 38, Toni 39)
Cagliari 0 Att: 32,920

Roma 5 (Cassano 10, 50, Totti 29, 58, Montella 52)
Parma 1 (Bovo 45) Att: 52,000

Siena 1 (Vergassola 43)
Livorno 1 (A Lucarelli 56) Att: 11,000

Udinese 3 (Pizarro pen 13, Di Michele 17, Iaquinta 36)
Lazio 0 Att: 15,000

Thursday, January 6
Atalanta 1 (Budan 81)
Fiorentina 0 Att: 13,388

Brescia 1 (Di Biagio pen 67)
Bologna 1 (Tare 18) Att: 7,113

Cagliari 2 (Esposito 48, Gobbi 55)
Messina 1 (Zampagna 21) Att: 15,000

Chievo 1 (Semioli 74)
Siena 3 (Taddei 44, Flo 54, 67) Att: 7,232

Lazio 3 (Di Canio 29, Cesar 74, Rocchi 85)
Roma 1 (Cassano 69) Att: 64,734

Livorno 0
Inter 2 (Vieri 42, pen 74) Att: 17,835

Milan 5 (Crespo 23, 36, 57, Shevchenko 50, Tomasson 89)
Lecce 2 (Bojinov 75, Cassetti 83) Att: 76,716

Parma 1 (Marchionni 85)
Juventus 1 (Ibrahimovic 64) Att: 23,009

Reggina 1 (Nakamura 6)
Palermo 0 Att: 17,316

Sampdoria 2 (Flachi 67, De Sanctis og 75)
Udinese 0 Att: 23,902

Sunday, January 9
Bologna 3 (Locatelli 27, Tare 60, Bellucci pen 87)
Chievo 1 (Zanchetta 77) Att: 14,531

Fiorentina 2 (Miccoli 21, 85)
Lazio 3 (Di Canio 33, Pandev 64, Dabo 82) Att: 30,142

Inter 3 (Martins 88, Vieri 90, Recoba 90)
Sampdoria 2 (Tonetto 44, Kutuzov 83) Att: 58,989

Juventus 4 (Del Piero 17, Camoranesi 25, pen 90, Ibrahimovic 75)
Livorno 2 (Vidigal 42, Melara 80) Att: 21,445

Lecce 1 (Babu 43)
Reggina 1 (Mozart pen 45) Att: 13,082

Messina 2 (Donati 6, Parisi pen 70)
Brescia 0 Att: 25,086

Palermo 0
Milan 0 Att: 34,047

Roma 2 (Montella 40, 53)
Atalanta 1 (Marcolini 85) Att: 42,057

Siena 0
Parma 1 (Gilardino 21) Att: 8,208

Udinese 2 (Di Natale 23, Pisano og 59)
Cagliari 0 Att: 13,886

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	18	13	4	1	33	10	43
Milan	18	11	6	1	32	11	39
Udinese	18	10	4	4	27	15	34
Inter	18	6	12	0	38	26	30
Sampdoria	18	8	3	7	19	15	27
Roma	18	7	5	6	33	27	26
Palermo	18	6	7	5	16	12	25
Cagliari	18	7	4	7	26	31	25
Lazio	18	6	5	7	25	26	23
Reggina	18	6	5	7	16	20	23
Lecce	18	5	7	6	34	36	22
Fiorentina	18	5	7	6	18	21	22
Messina	17	5	6	6	21	26	21
Bologna	18	5	5	8	19	20	20
Livorno	18	5	5	8	20	26	20
Chievo	18	5	5	8	16	26	20
Brescia	18	5	3	10	14	24	18
Parma	18	3	7	8	18	30	16
Siena	18	3	7	8	14	26	16
Atalanta	17	1	7	9	13	24	10

LEADING GOALSCORERS
14 Adriano (Inter)
14 Vincenzo Montella (Roma)
12 Andrii Shevchenko (Milan)
10 Valeri Bojinov (Lecce)
10 Francesco Totti (Roma)

ITALIAN CUP – last 16, 2nd legs

Jan 12: Bologna 1 Inter 3 *Inter 6-2 on agg*; Milan 2 Palermo 0 *Milan 4-1 on agg*; Parma 0 Fiorentina 3 *Fiorentina 5-0 on agg*; Sampdoria 1 Torino 2 *Sampdoria 3-2 on agg.*
Jan 13: Juventus 3 Atalanta 3 *Atalanta 5-3 on agg*; Lazio 3 Cagliari 2 (aet) *Agg 4-4. Cagliari on away goals*; Siena 1 Roma 5 *Roma 6-3 on agg*; Udinese 3 Lecce 4 *Agg 8-8. Udinese on away goals.*

KAZAKHSTAN

KAZAKHSTAN – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kairat	36	25	8	3	70	21	83
Irtysh	36	24	7	5	56	16	79
Tobol	36	22	11	3	87	27	77
Aktobe-Lento	36	22	8	6	52	19	74
Atyrau	36	20	11	5	49	31	71
Yesil-Bogatyr	36	18	5	13	53	40	59
Taraz	36	16	11	9	35	23	59
Ekibastuzetc	36	17	7	12	42	27	58
Shakhtyor	36	16	9	11	44	28	57
Zhenis*	36	15	6	15	45	44	48
Okjetpes	36	10	13	13	26	39	43
Vostok	36	11	7	18	42	54	40
Ordabasy	36	11	7	18	37	43	40
Zhetysu	36	11	7	18	34	55	40
Yassy	36	9	8	19	30	49	35
FK Almaty	36	4	8	24	22	53	20
Semey	36	4	1	31	25	84	13

Kaisar and Ak Jayik Oral were both expelled mid-season for rule violations; all remaining matches awarded 3-0 against them
**3pts deducted for non-payment of transfer fee*

POLAND

POLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wisla K	13	11	2	0	44	8	35
Legia	13	8	3	2	20	11	27
Groclin	13	8	1	4	22	16	25
Amica	13	7	3	3	19	12	24
Zaglebie	13	5	4	4	22	22	19
Cracovia	13	5	3	5	20	14	18
Polonia	13	5	3	5	15	21	18
Wisla P	13	5	2	6	17	20	17
Pogon	13	4	3	6	19	27	15
Gornik Z	13	3	4	6	17	17	13
Odra	13	4	1	8	14	18	13
Gornik L	13	4	0	9	13	23	12
Lech	13	3	3	7	16	27	12
Katowice	13	2	2	9	13	35	8

PORTUGAL

Friday, December 3
FC Porto 0
Beira Mar 1 (Beto 38)

Saturday, December 4
Guimaraes 1 (Nuno Assis 24)
Belenenses 0

Nacional 0
Uniao Leiria 3 (Edson 72, 88, Krpan 90)

Sunday, December 5
Academica 2 (Dario 51, Luciano pen 56)
Sporting Lisbon 3 (Liedson 20, 22, Rogerio 75)

Gil Vicente 3 (Braima 31, Julio Cesar 48, Tonanha 90)
Rio Ave 1 (Evandro 46)

Moreirense 1 (Manoel 80)
Boavista 1 (Joao Pinto 78)

Setubal 2 (Eusebio og 14, Hugo Alcantara 50)
Maritimo 0

Sporting Braga 0
Penafiel 1 (Clayton 60)

Monday, December 6
Benfica 2 (Simao 34, pen 43)
Estoril 1 (Joao Paulo 5)

Friday, December 10
Boavista 1 (Eder 90)
Academica 0

Saturday, December 11
Rio Ave 1 (Gama 2)
Setubal 0

Sporting Lisbon 0
Sporting Braga 0

Sunday, December 12
Beira Mar 1 (Tanque Silva 39)
Moreirense 3 (Lito 27, Fernando 44, Armando 67)

Belenenses 4 (Antchouet 23, Lourenco pen 28, Jose Pedro 34, 72)
Benfica 1 (Sokota 75)

Estoril 2 (Arrieta 43, Fellahi 85)
Nacional 0

Penafiel 1 (Edgar Marcelino 87)
Guimaraes 3 (Romeu 16, 42, Luis Mario 68)

Uniao Leiria 1 (Bruno Tiago og 85)
Gil Vicente 1 (Luis Coentrao 25)

Friday, December 17
FC Porto 1 (Maniche 26)
Moreirense 0

Saturday, December 18
Benfica 1 (Argel 22)
Penafiel 0

Sporting Braga 3 (Luis Loureiro 3, Tiago og 13, Baha 83)
Boavista 0

Sunday, December 19
Academica 1 (Luciano 35)
Beira Mar 1 (Tanque Silva 61)

Gil Vicente 2 (Roversio 78, Carlitos 85)
Estoril 0

Maritimo 1 (Bino 31)
Rio Ave 1 (Niquinha 83)

Nacional 2 (Miguel Fidalgo 8, Adriano 82)
Belenenses 0

Setubal 1 (Jorginho 57)
Uniao Leiria 1 (Caico 84)

Monday, December 20
Guimaraes 2 (Silva 10, 70)
Sporting Lisbon 4 (Beto 31, Liedson 44, Carlos Martins 55, 82)

Wednesday, December 22
Maritimo 1 (Pena 12)
FC Porto 1 (Luis Fabiano 33)

Friday, January 7
Estoril 2 (Buba 62, Verissimo og 81)
Setubal 1 (Meyong 10)

Saturday, January 8
Boavista 2 (Jose Manuel pen 28, Diogo Valente 90)
Guimaraes 1 (Alex 56)

Sporting Lisbon 2 (Liedson 22, 68)
Benfica 1 (Nuno Gomes 26)

Sunday, January 9
Beira Mar 1 (Murray 43)
Sporting Braga 4 (Wender 66, Joao Alves 68, Cesinha 73, Joao Tomas 75)

Belenenses 0
Gil Vicente 1 (Nandinho 38)

FC Porto 1 (Luis Fabiano 72)
Rio Ave 1 (Gaucho 28)

Moreirense 1 (Manoel 42)
Academica 0

Penafiel 0
Nacional 1 (Gouveia 74)

Uniao Leiria 0
Maritimo 0

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sporting Lisbon	16	9	4	3	35	20	31
FC Porto	16	8	6	2	22	10	30
Boavista	16	9	3	4	20	17	30
Sporting Braga	16	8	5	3	24	13	29
Benfica	16	8	4	4	24	18	28
Setubal	16	7	3	6	21	19	24
Uniao Leiria	16	5	8	3	18	15	23
Maritimo	16	5	8	3	17	15	23
Rio Ave	16	4	10	2	21	19	22
Gil Vicente	16	5	4	7	18	18	19
Guimaraes	16	5	4	7	16	18	19
Belenenses	16	5	3	8	25	24	18
Estoril	16	5	3	8	19	22	18
Nacional	16	5	3	8	17	24	18
Penafiel	16	5	2	9	17	30	17
Moreirense	16	3	6	7	15	24	15
Beira Mar	16	3	5	8	19	33	14
Academica	16	3	3	10	14	23	12

ESM
EUROPEAN SPORTS MAGAZINES

TEAM OF THE MONTH

La Gazzetta dello Sport · don balon · kicker · SPORT-EXPRESS · FOOT MAGAZINE · WORLD SOCCER · A BOLA · voetbal INTERNATIONAL · FANATIK · TIPS bladet

DECEMBER 2004 – HOW THEY VOTED

A BOLA (Por)
Buffon (Juventus); Paulo Ferreira (Chelsea), Puyol (Barcelona), Terry (Chelsea), Cole (Arsenal); Xavi (Barcelona), Deco (Barcelona), Robben (Chelsea); Shevchenko (Milan), Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Henry (Arsenal)

FANATIK (Tur)
Mondragon (Galatasaray); Thuram (Juventus), Bouma (PSV), Stalteri (Werder Bremen); Landzaat (AZ Alkmaar), Lampard (Chelsea), Julio Baptista (Sevilla), Yildirim (Heerenveen); Shevchenko (Milan), Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Montella (Roma)

GAZZETTA DELLO SPORT (Ita)
Buffon (Juventus); Puyol (Barcelona), Terry (Chelsea), Nesta (Milan); Maniche (FC Porto), Lampard (Chelsea), Deco (Barcelona), Diego (FC Porto); Shevchenko (Milan), Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Henry (Arsenal)

SPORT EXPRESS (Rus)
Buffon (Juventus); Thuram (Juventus), Campbell (Arsenal), Terry (Chelsea); Tiago (Chelsea), Lampard (Chelsea), Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Deco (Barcelona), Robben (Chelsea); Eto'o (Barcelona), Shevchenko (Milan)

VOETBAL INTERNATIONAL (Hol)
Buffon (Juventus); Puyol (Barcelona), Terry (Chelsea), Cole (Arsenal); Landzaat (AZ Alkmaar), Deco (Barcelona), Lampard (Chelsea), Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Robben (Chelsea); Shevchenko (Milan), Henry (Arsenal)

DON BALON (Spa)
Kameni (Espanyol); Maicon (Monaco), Campbell (Arsenal), Zambrotta (Juventus); Deco (Barcelona), Maniche (FC Porto), Lampard (Chelsea), Landzaat (AZ Alkmaar); Henry (Arsenal), Ezquerro (Athletic Bilbao), Adriano (Internazionale)

FOOT (Blg)
Cech (Chelsea); Puyol (Barcelona), Terry (Chelsea), Bordon (Schalke); Xavi (Barcelona), Ronaldinho (Barcelona), Lampard (Chelsea), Ballack (Bayern Munich); Eto'o (Barcelona), Henry (Arsenal), Shevchenko (Milan)

KICKER (Ger)
De Sanctis (Udinese); Cafu (Milan), Terry (Chelsea), Campbell (Arsenal), Van Bronckhorst (Barcelona); Deco (Barcelona), Ballack (Bayern Munich), Ronaldinho (Barcelona); Henry (Arsenal), Klose (Werder Bremen), Robben (Chelsea)

TIPS BLADET (Den)
Buffon (Juventus); Terry (Chelsea), Marchena (Valencia), Cocu (PSV); Deco (Barcelona), Gerrard (Liverpool), Hleb (Stuttgart), Pizarro (Udinese); Totti (Roma), Eto'o (Barcelona), Henry (Arsenal)

WORLD SOCCER (UK)
Cech (Chelsea); Puyol (Barcelona), Ricardo Carvalho (Chelsea), Maldini (Milan); Ernst (Werder Bremen), Xavi (Barcelona), Gerrard (Liverpool), Ronaldinho (Barcelona); Shevchenko (Milan), Nilmar (Lyon), Eto'o (Barcelona)

LEADING GOALSCORERS
14 Liedson (Sporting Lisbon)
10 Antchouet (Belenenses)
10 Simao Sabrosa (Benfica)

PORTUGUESE CUP – last 30

Dec 21: Benfica 4 AD Oliveirense 1 (aet).
Dec 22: Oliveira do Hospital 2 Moreirense 1.
Dec 23: Vianense 1 Boavista 3.
Jan 4: Sporting Lisbon 4 Pampilhosa 1.
Jan 12: Aliados do Lordelo 0 Guimaraes 2; Academico de Viseu 1 Setubal 3; Beira Mar 2 Espinho 2 (aet; Beira Mar 4-3 on pens); Belenenses 3 Pombal 0; Estrela Amadora 1 Louletano 0 (aet); Fiaes 0 Maritimo 0 (aet; Maritimo 4-1 on pens); Odivelas 1 Sporting Braga 2 (aet); Penafiel 3 Maia 2; Pinhalnovense 3 Leca 0; Rio Ave 0 Academica 2; Uniao Leiria 1 Nacional 2.

ROMANIA

Dec 5: Steaua 3 Apulum 0; Poli AEK 2 Sportul 0.

ROMANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Steaua	15	10	3	2	33	13	33
Dinamo	15	9	0	6	29	20	27
National	15	8	3	4	26	17	27
Farul	15	8	3	4	22	13	27
Rapid	15	8	3	4	24	16	27
CFR Cluj	15	6	6	3	23	19	24
Gloria	15	6	2	7	27	24	20
Otelul	15	6	2	7	11	12	20
Bacau	15	5	5	5	11	13	20
Sportul	15	5	4	6	17	18	19
Poli Iasi	15	4	4	7	16	25	16
Arges	15	3	6	6	18	25	15
Poli AEK	15	4	3	8	17	26	15
Apulum	15	4	3	8	17	34	15
Brasov	15	4	2	9	18	26	14
U Craiova	15	3	5	7	14	22	14

SCOTLAND

Saturday, December 4
Aberdeen 3 (Pasquinelli 9, 31, Clark 72)
Kilmarnock 2 (Invincible 7, Leven 18) Att: 11,139

Celtic 2 (Hartson 18, 83)
Hibernian 1 (Caldwell 75) Att: 58,384

Dundee Utd 0
Motherwell 1 (Paterson 17) Att: 5,252

Hearts 3 (Wyness 11, Pereira 46, Hartley pen 56)
Dunfermline 0 Att: 10,084

Livingston 1 (McPake 24)
Dundee 0 Att: 4,509

Sunday, December 5
Inverness 1 (Bayne 3)
Rangers 1 (Prso 51) Att: 6,543

Saturday, December 11
Dundee Utd 3 (Brebner 17, Robson 22, McIntyre 46)
Kilmarnock 0 Att: 5,097

Hibernian 2 (Riordan 24, Glass 64)
Aberdeen 1 (Mackie 37) Att: 13,461

Inverness 1 (Juanjo pen 68)
Hearts 1 (Hartley pen 62) Att: 2,011

Motherwell 2 (O'Donnell 17, Foran 47)
Livingston 0 Att: 4,363

Rangers 3 (Novo pen 3, Prso 4, Malcolm 50)
Dundee 0 Att: 48,114

Sunday, December 12
Dunfermline 0
Celtic 2 (Sutton 16, Petrov 31) Att: 7,650

Saturday, December 18
Celtic 1 (Sutton 18)
Dundee Utd 0 Att: 56,318

Dundee 1 (Barrett 57)
Aberdeen 0 Att: 7,310

Hibernian 2 (Glass 66, Riordan 90)
Dunfermline 1 (Tod 68) Att: 9,859

Motherwell 1 (Clarkson 65)
Inverness 2 (Hart 17, Bayne 42) Att: 4,267

Sunday, December 19
Kilmarnock 0
Rangers 1 (Arveladze 16) Att: 11,156

Sunday, December 26
Hearts 0
Celtic 2 (McGeady 9, Petrov 68) Att: 16,163

Monday, December 27
Aberdeen 0
Inverness 0 Att: 18,250

Dundee Utd 1 (Scotland 8)
Hibernian 4 (Riordan 13, O'Connor 22, Orman 58, Morrow 81) Att: 10,152

Dunfermline 0
Livingston 0 Att: 5,092

Kilmarnock 3 (Invincible 18, Ford 38, Boyd 82)
Dundee 1 (Sutton 39) Att: 5,468

Rangers 4 (Novo 3, 15, Arveladze 53, Thompson 86)
Motherwell 1 (McDonald 49) Att: 49,909

Saturday, January 1
Dundee Utd 1 (McCracken 11)
Rangers 1 (Namouchi 90) Att: 10,461

Dunfermline 3 (Tod 13, 28, 54)
Dundee 1 (Barrett 40) Att: 4,426

Sunday, January 2
Celtic 2 (Hartson 15, Sutton pen 57)
Livingston 1 (Hamilton 39) Att: 57,593

Hibernian 1 (Riordan 24)
Hearts 1 (Hartley 55) Att: 17,259

Monday, January 3
Inverness 0
Kilmarnock 2 (Invincible 79, 90) Att: 1,346

Motherwell 0
Aberdeen 0 Att: 7,948

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	21	17	2	2	49	19	53
Rangers	21	15	5	1	43	10	50
Hibernian	21	11	4	6	36	29	37
Aberdeen	21	10	6	5	23	19	36
Motherwell	21	9	3	9	28	27	30
Hearts	20	7	7	6	20	17	28
Kilmarnock	21	8	2	11	29	36	26
Dunfermline	21	5	5	11	20	30	20
Inverness	21	4	7	10	20	31	19
Dundee Utd	21	3	7	11	20	34	16
Livingston	20	4	4	12	17	32	16
Dundee	21	4	4	13	20	41	16

LEADING GOALSCORERS
16 John Hartson (Celtic)
14 Nacho Novo (Rangers)

SCOTTISH CUP – 3rd rnd (last 32)

Jan 8: Arbroath 0 Aberdeen 2; Ayr 3 Stranraer 3; Berwick 0 Brechin 3; Clyde 3 Falkirk 0; East Fife 0 Dunfermline 0; Hibernian 2 Dundee 0; Kilmarnock 2 Motherwell 0; Montrose 1 Queen of the South 2; Partick 0 Hearts 0; Raith 0 Alloa 2; St Mirren 3 Hamilton 0.
Jan 9: Celtic 2 Rangers 1; Inverness 1 St Johnstone 0.
Jan 11: Livingston 2 Morton 1.

Still to play: Gretna v Dundee Utd; Ross County v Airdrie.

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

Dec 4: Sutjeska 3 Borac 1; Hajduk K 1 Hajduk B 1; Smederevo 0 Zeta 2; Buducnost P 3 Vojvodina 1; Obilic 2 OFK 0; Zeleznik 3 Red Star 5.
Dec 5: Partizan 3 Cukaricki 1; Radnicki NB 0 Zemun 0.

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Partizan	15	13	2	0	39	8	41
Red Star	15	12	2	1	38	11	38
Zeta	15	11	1	3	30	12	34
OFK	15	8	1	6	22	18	25
Buducnost P	15	7	2	6	21	20	23
Zemun	15	6	4	5	18	19	22
Vojvodina	15	5	4	6	18	19	19
Sutjeska	15	5	4	6	13	21	19
Hajduk K	15	4	6	5	16	18	18
Smederevo	15	4	5	6	9	15	17
Cukaricki	15	4	4	7	15	18	16
Radnicki NB	15	4	4	7	13	20	16
Borac	15	4	4	7	12	22	16
Obilic	15	3	4	8	16	27	13
Hajduk B	15	1	5	9	11	29	8
Zeleznik	15	1	4	10	12	26	7

SPAIN

Saturday, December 4
Albacete 0
Valencia 1 (Xisco 85) Att: 16,000

Barcelona 4 (Eto'o 25, 90, Deco 29, Iniesta 72)
Malaga 0 Att: 67,226

Real Sociedad 1 (Kovacevic 36)
Betis 0 Att: 18,518

Sunday, December 5
Atletico Madrid 3 (Fernando Torres 15, Salva 30, Colsa 55)
Osasuna 2 (Valdo 45, Morales 73) Att: 45,000

Levante 0
Getafe 0 Att: 11,146

Mallorca 3 (Delibasic 80, Luis Garcia 82, 87)
Numancia 2 (Tevenet 21, Moreno 56) Att: 12,000

Racing Santander 2 (Benayoun 23, Javi Guerrero 86)
Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Luque pen 49, Pandiani 90) Att: 13,032

Sevilla 2 (Julio Baptista 53, Carlos 66)
Athletic Bilbao 0 Att: 40,000

Villarreal 0
Real Madrid 0 Att: 20,000

Zaragoza 0
Espanyol 1 (Tamudo 30) Att: 32,000

Saturday, December 11
Albacete 1 (Gonzalez 73)
Barcelona 2 (Iniesta 2, Xavi 84) Att: 17,000

Athletic Bilbao 1 (Del Horno 46)
Atletico Madrid 0 Att: 34,000

Sunday, December 12
Betis 2 (Edu 27, Ricardo Oliveira 71)
Racing Santander 1 (Arizmendi 89) Att: 30,000

Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Sergio 50, Scaloni 86)
Sevilla 2 (Carlos 42, Julio Baptista 90) Att: 20,000

Espanyol 2 (Pochettino 25, Serrano 35)
Mallorca 1 (Pereyra 59) Att: 15,150

Getafe 1 (Nano 81)
Villarreal 2 (Guayre 7, Forlan 59) Att: 11,000

Malaga 1 (Amoroso 46)
Levante 0 Att: 22,000

Osasuna 2 (Morales 4, Punal pen 75)
Zaragoza 2 (Oscar 14, 64) Att: 15,728

Real Madrid 1 (Ronaldo 41)
Real Sociedad 1 (Nihat 71) Att: 70,000
Match abandoned after 87 minutes because of bomb scare; remainder of game played January 5

Valencia 1 (Marchena 20)
Numancia 0 Att: 35,000

Saturday, December 18
Barcelona 1 (Ronaldinho 79)
Valencia 1 (Fiore 62) Att: 82,000

Levante 1 (Culebras 41)
Albacete 1 (Gaspar 29) Att: 14,814

Racing Santander 2 (Benayoun 24, Javi Guerrero 51)
Real Madrid 3 (Owen 34, Raul 61, Zidane 90) Att: 17,383

Sunday, December 19
Atletico Madrid 1 (Antonio Lopez 28)
Deportivo La Coruna 0 Att: 45,000

Mallorca 1 (Jesus Perera 80)
Osasuna 2 (Valdo 33, 41) Att: 14,000

Numancia 0
Espanyol 0 Att: 8,000

Real Sociedad 1 (Nihat 70)
Getafe 1 (Pernia pen 79) Att: 22,000

Sevilla 2 (Daniel Alves 3, Javi Navarro 47)
Betis 1 (Fernando 44) Att: 45,000

Villarreal 3 (Pena 45, Riquelme 69, Forlan 83)
Malaga 0 Att: 14,000

Zaragoza 0
Athletic Bilbao 2 (Ezquerro 54, 79) Att: 27,000

Tuesday, December 21
Barcelona 2 (Deco 29, Eto'o 87)
Levante 1 (Jofre 60) Att: 51,368

Betis 1 (Joaquin 7)
Atletico Madrid 0 Att: 25,000

Wednesday, December 22
Albacete 2 (Pacheco 15, 86)
Villarreal 2 (Forlan 31, Guayre 34) Att: 11,000

Athletic Bilbao 4 (Yeste 6, pen 90, Ezquerro 10, Gurpegi 77)
Mallorca 0 Att: 30,000

Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Pablo Amo 49, Luque 51)
Zaragoza 3 (Cani 35, Milito 56, Villa 68) Att: 15,000

Getafe 2 (Riki 5, 32)
Racing Santander 0 Att: 12,000

Malaga 1 (Valcarce 41)
Real Sociedad 5 (Kovacevic 11, 51, Labaka 60, Nihat 70, 82) Att: 16,000

Osasuna 2 (Morales 49, 68)
Numancia 0 Att: 14,260

Real Madrid 0
Sevilla 1 (Julio Baptista 19) Att: 65,000

Valencia 3 (Baraja 11, Mista 81, 87)
Espanyol 0 Att: 40,000

Wednesday, January 5
Real Madrid 2 (Ronaldo 41, Zidane pen 90)
Real Sociedad 1 (Nihat 71) Att: 22,000
Remaining six minutes of game abandoned on December 12

Saturday, January 8
Numancia 1 (Tevenet 65)
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Del Horno 47) Att: 11,000

Sevilla 0
Getafe 0 Att: 40,000

Valencia 2 (Baraja 53, Mista 59)
Levante 1 (Congo 73) Att: 50,000

Sunday, January 9
Atletico Madrid 0
Real Madrid 3 (Ronaldo 14, 84, Solari 81) Att: 54,000

Espanyol 4 (Maxi Rodriguez 32, Fredson 37, 83, De la Pena 40)
Osasuna 1 (Webo 16) Att: 19,323

Mallorca 2 (Luis Garcia 56, Okubo 64)
Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Luque 49, 62) Att: 14,000

Racing Santander 2 (Javi Guerrero 26, Regueiro 40)
Malaga 1 (Cesar Navas 86) Att: 11,836

Real Sociedad 0
Albacete 2 (Pacheco 6, 48) Att: 20,528

Villarreal 3 (Forlan 29, 86, Gonzalo Rodriguez 48)
Barcelona 0 Att: 22,000

Zaragoza 1 (Savio 44)
Betis 0 Att: 32,000

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	18	13	3	2	35	14	42
Real Madrid	18	11	2	5	29	13	35
Valencia	18	10	5	3	29	13	35
Espanyol	18	10	3	5	22	13	33
Sevilla	18	9	5	4	21	18	32
Betis	18	7	6	5	22	21	27
Osasuna	18	8	3	7	27	29	27
Villarreal	18	6	7	5	24	14	25
Athletic Bilbao	18	7	4	7	25	21	25
Atletico Madrid	18	7	4	7	18	17	25
Zaragoza	18	7	4	7	25	26	25
Dep La Coruna	18	5	8	5	24	27	23
Real Sociedad	18	6	4	8	22	23	22
Levante	18	6	3	9	19	26	21
Getafe	18	5	4	9	16	21	19
Albacete	18	4	7	7	17	23	19
R Santander	18	5	4	9	17	26	19
Malaga	18	4	3	11	13	29	15
Mallorca	18	3	5	10	17	30	14
Numancia	18	3	4	11	11	29	13

LEADING GOALSCORERS
13 Samuel Eto'o (Barcelona)
10 Ronaldo (Real Madrid)
9 Ricardo Oliveira (Betis)

SPANISH CUP – last 16, 1st legs

Jan 11: Gramenet 2 Lleida 0; Recreativo 0 Sevilla 2.
Jan 12: Elche 1 Numancia 0; Lanzarote 2 Athletic Bilbao 1; Lorca 1 Atletico Madrid 3; Mirandes 1 Betis 3; Osasuna 2 Getafe 0.
Jan 13: Valladolid 0 Real Madrid 0.

SWITZERLAND

Dec 5: Neuchatel Xamax 0 Thun 2; Grasshopper 2 Basle 3; Schaffhausen 1 Servette 4; St Gallen 2 Aarau 1; Young Boys 2 Zurich 4.
Dec 11: Basle 3 Thun 3.
Dec 12: Zurich 1 Schaffhausen 1; Servette 1 St Gallen 1; Aarau 1 Grasshopper 2; Young Boys 2 Neuchatel Xamax 1.

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Basle	18	10	5	3	36	20	35
Thun	18	8	4	6	26	18	28
Neuchatel X	18	8	4	6	26	22	28
Zurich	18	7	4	7	26	25	25
Young Boys	18	6	6	6	31	29	24
Aarau	18	6	5	7	26	26	23
Grasshopper	18	5	7	6	16	26	22
Servette*	18	6	5	7	24	28	20
St Gallen	18	4	7	7	23	29	19
Schaffhausen	18	3	7	8	21	32	16

**3pts deducted for licensing irregularities during the 2003-04 season*

TURKEY

Dec 3: Fenerbahce 5 Ankaragucu 0.
Dec 4: Denizlispor 0 Malatyaspor 0; Trabzonspor 1 Rizespor 0; Diyarbakirspor 3 Konyaspor 3; Genclerbirligi 1 Galatasaray 3.
Dec 5: Sakaryaspor 4 Kayserispor 2; Ankaraspor 0 Samsunspor 1; Besiktas 2 Istanbulspor 1; Gaziantepspor 6 Sebatspor 4.
Dec 10: Kayserispor 1 Besiktas 2.
Dec 11: Sebatspor 0 Sakaryaspor 1; Samsunspor 0 Trabzonspor 4; Malatyaspor 2 Gaziantepspor 1; Istanbulspor 1 Ankaraspor 1.
Dec 12: Galatasaray 1 Fenerbahce 0; Konyaspor 3 Ankaragucu 4; Genclerbirligi 1 Denizlispor 3; Rizespor 3 Diyarbakirspor 0.
Dec 17: Denizlispor 0 Galatasaray 0.
Dec 18: Fenerbahce 3 Konyaspor 0; Gaziantepspor 1 Genclerbirligi 0; Ankaragucu 0 Rizespor 0; Trabzonspor 1 Istanbulspor 1.
Dec 19: Besiktas 6 Sebatspor 1; Diyarbakirspor 3 Samsunspor 0; Sakaryaspor 4 Malatyaspor 1; Ankaraspor 4 Kayserispor 1.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fenerbahce	17	14	1	2	42	9	43
Galatasaray	17	12	3	2	30	11	39
Trabzonspor	17	11	4	2	33	13	37
Denizlispor	17	9	3	5	23	18	30
Besiktas	17	8	5	4	40	25	29
Rizespor	17	8	5	4	23	12	29
Malatyaspor	17	7	4	6	25	22	25
Gaziantepspor	17	7	3	7	25	24	24
Genclerbirligi	17	6	3	8	19	23	21
Konyaspor	17	4	8	5	31	36	20
Samsunspor	17	6	2	9	23	32	20
Ankaraspor	17	5	4	8	23	25	19
Diyarbakirspor	17	5	4	8	18	28	19
Ankaragucu	17	5	4	8	13	25	19
Sakaryaspor	17	5	1	11	20	35	16
Istanbulspor	17	3	6	8	16	25	15
Kayserispor	17	3	2	12	21	39	11
Sebatspor	17	1	6	10	21	44	9

UKRAINE

Dec 4: Kryvbas 0 Dynamo 2.
Dec 5: Borysfen 0 Tavriya 1; Metalurh Z 1 Vorskla 0; Arsenal 2 Metalurh D 1; Obolon 0 Dnipro 1; Metalist 0 Chornomorets 1; Zakarpattya 2 Volyn 2.
Dec 10: Shakhtar 4 Illichivets 1.
Dec 11: Tavriya 1 Zakarpattya 0.

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shakhtar	15	13	0	2	31	8	39
Dynamo	15	12	2	1	33	7	38
Metalurh D	15	10	2	3	24	15	32
Volyn	15	7	4	4	19	17	25
Chornomorets	15	7	2	6	15	12	23
Dnipro	15	6	5	4	18	18	23
Metalist	15	6	2	7	17	21	20
Illichivets	15	5	5	5	24	22	20
Arsenal	15	5	5	5	17	20	20
Kryvbas	15	4	6	5	12	15	18
Tavriya	15	4	3	8	11	17	15
Metalurh Z	15	2	8	5	10	17	14
Vorskla	15	3	3	9	7	17	12
Zakarpattya	15	2	5	8	11	18	11
Obolon	15	2	5	8	8	21	11
Borysfen	15	0	7	8	6	18	7

SOUTH AMERICA

SUDAMERICANA CUP

Final, 1st leg

Dec 8 - Hernando Siles stadium, La Paz
Bolivar (Bol) 1 (Chiorazzo 75)
Boca Juniors (Arg) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 42,798. **Ref:** Simon (Bra)
Bolivar: Machado - Sanchez, Ferreira, Sandy, Pachi, Galindo (Colque 65), Garcia (Guiberguis 74), Tufino, Gutierrez, Chiorazzo, Suarez.
Boca: Abbondanzieri - Calvo, Schiavi, Traverso, Matellan, Cagna, Cascini, Guglielminpietro (Donnet 82), Vargas (Cardozo 65), Barros Schelotto (Carreno 88), Tevez.

Final, 2nd leg

Dec 17 - La Bombonera, Buenos Aires
Boca Juniors 2 (Palermo 14, Tevez 28)
Bolivar 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 55,000. **Ref:** Chandia (Chl)
Boca 2-1 on agg
Boca: Abbondanzieri - Calvo, Schiavi, Traverso, Matellan, Cagna (Ledesma 67), Cascini, Guglielminpietro (Cardozo 82), Barros Schelotto, Palermo, Tevez (Vargas 75).
Bolivar: Machado - Ferreira, Sanchez, Sandy, Colque (Suarez 46), Tufino, Galindo, Pizarro, Garcia, Gutierrez, Chiorazzo.

LIBERTADORES CUP

Preliminary rnd draw

Atletico Junior (Col) v Oriente Petrolero (Bol)
LDU Quito (Ecu) v 3rd Uruguayan representatives
Guadalajara (Mex) v Cienciano (Per)
Mineros Guayana (Ven) v America (Col)
Quilmes (Arg) v Colo Colo (Chl)
Tacuary (Par) v Palmeiras (Bra)
1st legs - Feb 1/2/3; 2nd legs - Feb 8/9/10

Winners qualify for group stage

Group stage draw

Group 1
Atletico Paranaense (Bra)
Independiente Medellin (Col)
Libertad (Par)
Mineros Guayana (Ven) OR America (Col)

Group 2
Bolivar (Bol)
Danubio (Uru)
Santos (Bra)
LDU Quito (Ecu) OR 3rd Uruguayan representatives

Group 3
Sao Paulo (Bra)
The Strongest (Bol)
Universidad de Chile (Chl)
Quilmes (Arg) OR Colo Colo (Chl)

Group 4
Cerro Porteno (Par)
Deportivo Tachira (Ven)
Santo Andre (Bra)
Tacuary (Par) OR Palmeiras (Bra)

Group 5
Nacional (Uru)
Olmedo (Ecu)
River Plate (Arg)
Atletico Junior (Col) OR Oriente Petrolero (Bol)

Group 6
Alianza Lima (Per)
Banfield (Arg)
Caracas (Ven)
Tigres (Mex)

Group 7
Cobreloa (Chl)
Once Caldas (Col)
San Lorenzo (Arg)
Guadalajara (Mex) OR Cienciano (Per)

Group 8
Boca Juniors (Arg)
Deportivo Cuenca (Ecu)
Pachuca (Mex)
Sporting Cristal (Per)

Top two from each group qualify for knockout stages

ARGENTINA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, December 3
Racing Club 4 (Lopez 16, Romero 39, Barrado 58, Cardetti 90)
Banfield 0

Saturday, December 4
Argentinos Juniors 3 (Pisculichi 32, Mignini 52, Niell 89)
Colon Santa Fe 1 (Gandin 44)

Arsenal 2 (Denis 17, Gonzalez 26)
Independiente 1 (Aguero 46)

Lanus 2 (Obolo 1, Graf 77)
San Lorenzo 3 (Romagnoli pen 13, Peirone 36, 64)

Sunday, December 5
Almagro 1 (Miranda pen 27)
Olimpo 1 (Galvan 45)

Estudiantes 0
Velez Sarsfield 2 (Cubero 11, Bravo 84)

Instituto 2 (Cobo 58, Vilallonga 65)
Huracan 2 (Caggiano 15, 52)

Newell's Old Boys 2 (Belluschi 30, Marino 33)
Gimnasia LP 0

Quilmes 0
Boca Juniors 1 (Cangele pen 90)

River Plate 2 (Zapata 32, Cuevas 52)
Rosario Central 0

Friday, December 10
Banfield 0
Argentinos Juniors 2 (Pisculichi 13, pen 18)

Colon Santa Fe 2 (Hernandez 52, Moreno y Fabianesi 71)
Instituto 1 (Vilallonga 21)

Saturday, December 11
Gimnasia LP 0
Quilmes 0

Rosario Central 2 (Raldes 47, Albil og 87)
Estudiantes 1 (Aquino 4)

Sunday, December 12
Boca Juniors 1 (Boselli 79)
Almagro 1 (Miranda 13)

Huracan 0
River Plate 0

Independiente 2 (Castillo 10, Insua 78)
Newell's Old Boys 0

Olimpo 2 (Galvan 15, Estevez 79)
Lanus 0

San Lorenzo 4 (Peirone 21, 65, 69, Lavezzi 28)
Racing Club 1 (Romero 23)

Velez Sarsfield 1 (Fuentes 15)
Arsenal 1 (Hirsig 5)

ARGENTINA – OPENING – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Newell's OB	19	10	6	3	22	11	36
Velez Sarsfield	19	10	4	5	21	16	34
River Plate	19	9	6	4	28	19	33
Estudiantes	19	7	9	3	22	14	30
San Lorenzo	19	8	6	5	29	22	30
Rosario Central	19	8	6	5	19	15	30
Colon Santa Fe	19	7	6	6	24	22	27
Boca Juniors	19	7	5	7	22	16	26
Banfield	19	6	8	5	24	22	26
Racing Club	19	8	2	9	23	22	26
Lanus	19	6	8	5	25	26	26
Gimnasia LP	19	6	7	6	16	23	25
Arsenal	19	5	9	5	17	16	24
Quilmes	19	6	6	7	14	18	24
Independiente	19	6	5	8	23	26	23
Argentinos Jnrs	19	6	4	9	17	18	22
Almagro	19	4	10	5	15	18	22
Olimpo	19	4	5	10	21	29	17
Instituto	19	2	8	9	16	30	14
Huracan	19	2	6	11	19	34	12

TOP GOALSCORERS
12 Lisandro Lopez (Racing Club)
8 Jeremias Caggiano (Huracan)
8 Claudio Graf (Lanus)
8 Osvaldo Miranda (Almagro)
8 Rolando Zarate (Velez Sarsfield)

BOLIVIA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP 2nd stage

Dec 3: Jorge Wilstermann 2 Union Central 2.
Dec 4: Bolivar 2 Real Potosi 0; Oriente 2 Blooming 0; San Jose 3 The Strongest 4.
Dec 7: Bolivar 1 Oriente 2.
Dec 10: Blooming 1 San Jose 2; Union Central 0 Real Potosi 3; Jorge Wilstermann 0 Oriente 1; The Strongest 7 Bolivar 0.
Dec 12: Bolivar 3 Union Central 1; San Jose 2 Jorge Wilstermann 1; Real Potosi 4 Blooming 3; Oriente 0 The Strongest 1.
Dec 15: Oriente 9 Bolivar 0; Union Central 1 San Jose 2; Jorge Wilstermann 1 Real Potosi 1; The Strongest 1 Blooming 0.
Dec 19: Blooming 3 Union Central 4; Bolivar 1 Jorge Wilstermann 1; San Jose 4 Oriente 1; Real Potosi 3 The Strongest 2.

BOLIVIA – CLOSING – 2ND STAGE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Oriente*	14	9	0	5	31	18	27
The Strongest*	14	9	0	5	27	14	27
Real Potosi	14	7	3	4	32	27	24
San Jose	14	7	3	4	28	27	24
J Wilstermann	14	5	5	4	15	14	20
Bolivar	14	5	3	6	22	32	18
Blooming	14	4	1	9	22	28	13
Union Central	14	1	3	10	18	35	6

**Oriente and The Strongest went into championship play-off after finishing level on points and goal difference*

Closing championship play-off
(best of three legs)
Dec 21: Oriente 3 The Strongest 1.
Dec 23: The Strongest 2 Oriente 1.
Dec 25: The Strongest 1 Oriente 1
The Strongest 4-3 on pens.

BRAZIL

Dec 4: Atletico Mineiro 0 Paysandu 0; Fluminense 1 Ponte Preta 0; Guarani 2 Figueirense 1; Criciuma 1 Parana 2; Goias 0 Palmeiras 0; Corinthians 3 Vasco da Gama 1.
Dec 5: Internacional 2 Cruzeiro 0; Flamengo 0 Coritiba 0; Vitoria 1 Sao Paulo 4; Santos 5 Gremio 1; Atletico Paranaense 5 Sao Caetano 2; Juventude 1 Botafogo 0.
Dec 11: Palmeiras 3 Criciuma 2; Parana 0 Fluminense 1; Paysandu 4 Guarani 2; Gremio 0 Atletico Mineiro 1.
Dec 12: Figueirense 1 Juventude 0; Vasco da Gama 1 Atletico Paranaense 0; Botafogo 1 Corinthians 2; Sao Caetano 0 Santos 3; Ponte Preta 1 Internacional 2; Cruzeiro 4 Vitoria 0; Sao Paulo 1 Flamengo 1; Coritiba 1 Goias 0.
Dec 19: Criciuma 3 Coritiba 3; Internacional 2 Parana 1; Flamengo 6 Cruzeiro 2; Fluminense 1 Palmeiras 1; Vitoria 1 Ponte Preta 2; Goias 2 Sao Paulo 0; Guarani 2 Gremio 0; Atletico Mineiro 3 Sao Caetano 0; Santos 2 Vasco da Gama 1; Atletico Paranaense 1 Botafogo 1; Corinthians 5 Figueirense 2; Juventude 1 Paysandu 2.

BRAZIL – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Santos	46	27	8	11	103	58	89
At Paranaense	46	25	11	10	93	56	86
Sao Paulo	46	24	10	12	78	43	82
Palmeiras	46	22	13	11	72	47	79
Corinthians	46	20	14	12	54	54	74
Goias	46	21	9	16	81	68	72
Juventude	46	20	10	16	60	66	70
Internacional	46	20	7	19	66	59	67
Fluminense	46	18	13	15	65	68	67
Ponte Preta	46	19	7	20	43	73	64
Figueirense	46	17	12	17	57	59	63
Coritiba	46	15	17	14	53	48	62
Cruzeiro	46	16	8	22	69	81	56
Paysandu	46	14	14	18	56	76	56
Parana	46	15	9	22	52	73	54
Vasco da Gama	46	14	12	20	64	68	54
Flamengo	46	13	15	18	51	53	54
Sao Caetano*	46	23	8	15	65	49	53
At Mineiro	46	12	17	17	60	66	53
Botafogo	46	11	18	17	62	71	51
Criciuma	46	13	11	22	61	78	50
Guarani	46	11	16	19	43	55	49
Vitoria	46	13	9	24	68	87	48
Gremio	46	9	12	25	60	80	39

**24pts deducted for fielding defender Serginho in several matches when, according to Brazil's sports disciplinary tribunal, the club had medical evidence that the player had a heart condition. Serginho died on the pitch during a game against Sao Paulo on October 27*

CHILE

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP Play-offs – quarter-finals
1st legs
Dec 1: Cobreloa 2 Cobresal 1; Dep Temuco 3 U Catolica 1.
Dec 2: Union Espanola 4 U de Chile 3; Everton 1 Colo Colo 3.

2nd legs
Dec 4: Cobresal 2 Cobreloa 2 *Cobreloa 4-3 on agg*; U Catolica 6 Dep Temuco 2 *U Catolica 7-5 on agg.*
Dec 5: U de Chile 3 Union Espanola 2 *Agg 6-6. Union Espanola 4-2 on pens*; Colo Colo 3 Everton 4 *Colo Colo 6-5 on agg.*

Semi-finals
1st legs
Dec 8: Cobreloa 4 Colo Colo 1.
Dec 9: Union Espanola 3 U Catolica 1.

2nd legs
Dec 11: Colo Colo 1 Cobreloa 1 *Cobreloa 5-2 on agg.*
Dec 12: U Catolica 3 Union Espanola 1 *Agg 4-4. Union Espanola 4-3 on pens.*

Final, 1st leg
Dec 16 - Santa Laura stadium, Santiago
Union Espanola 1 (Jerez 68)
Cobreloa 3 (D Perez 28, R Perez 52, Miranda og 80)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Selman
Sent off: Rubilar (Union Espanola) 62min

Final, 2nd leg
Dec 19 - Municipal stadium, Calama
Cobreloa 0
Union Espanola 0
Att: 15,000. **Ref:** Pozo
Cobreloa 3-1 on agg

COLOMBIA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP Play-offs
Dec 5: America 2 Nacional 1; Indep Medellin 0 Dep Cali 2; Bucaramanga 0 At Junior 1.
Dec 8: At Nacional 2 Tolima 0; Bucaramanga 0 Dep Cali 1; At Junior 2 Indep Medellin 0.
Dec 12: Tolima 1 America 1; Dep Cali 1 At Junior 1; Indep Medellin 5 Bucaramanga 3.

CLOSING PLAY-OFFS – GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
At Nacional	6	3	2	1	6	3	11
America	6	2	2	2	10	8	8
Tolima	6	2	1	3	9	9	7
Once Caldas	6	2	1	3	5	10	7

GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
At Junior	6	4	1	1	11	5	13
Dep Cali	6	2	2	2	6	6	8
Indep Medellin	6	2	2	2	9	10	8
Bucaramanga	6	1	1	4	5	10	4

Group winners qualified for closing Final

Final, 1st leg
Dec 15
At Junior 3 (Rojano 17, Palacio 74, Penaloza 80)
At Nacional 0
HT: 1-0

Final, 2nd leg
Dec 19
At Nacional 5 (Perea 19, Mosquera 24, 59, Diaz 63, Hurtado 68)
At Junior 2 (Arzuaga 39, Ribonetto 88)
HT: 2-1
Agg 5-5. At Junior 5-4 on pens

ECUADOR

OVERALL CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS
Dec 4: Barcelona 2 Dep Cuenca 1.
Dec 5: El Nacional 2 Aucas 2; LDU Quito 2 Olmedo 0.
Dec 8: Olmedo 1 Barcelona 0; Aucas 2 Dep Cuenca 3; El Nacional 1 LDU Quito 0.
Dec 12: Barcelona 2 El Nacional 3; Aucas 0 LDU Quito 2; Dep Cuenca 1 Olmedo 3.
Dec 19: El Nacional 3 Dep Cuenca 1; Olmedo 2 Aucas 1; LDU Quito 1 Barcelona 0.

ECUADOR – CHAMP'SHIP PLAY-OFFS – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dep Cuenca	10	6	1	3	16	13	19.5 [0.5]
Olmedo	10	6	0	4	16	14	19 [1]
LDU Quito	10	5	2	3	13	9	18 [1]
El Nacional	10	4	3	3	17	16	15.5 [0.5]
Barcelona	10	3	2	5	14	16	13 [2]
Aucas	10	1	2	7	11	19	7 [2]

Bonus points from opening and closing championships in brackets

PARAGUAY

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP
Dec 3: Cerro Porteno 2 Sport Colombia 1.
Dec 4: Nacional 1 12 de Octubre 1.
Dec 5: Sol de America 4 Sportivo Luqueno 1; Tacuary 1 Libertad 1; Guarani 3 Olimpia 1.

PARAGUAY – CLOSING – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cerro Porteno	18	12	2	4	30	13	38
Libertad	18	9	4	5	27	22	31
Nacional	18	7	6	5	29	24	27
Tacuary	18	4	12	2	15	14	24
Guarani	18	5	8	5	21	29	23
Sport Colombia	18	5	6	7	22	24	21
Sol de America	18	5	5	8	25	27	20
Sp Luqueno	18	4	8	6	23	29	20
12 de Octubre	18	3	9	6	19	22	18
Olimpia	18	4	4	10	22	29	16

Cerro Porteno are also overall champions having won the opening championship too

PERU

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP
Dec 1: Universidad SMP 1 Cienciano 1; Sporting Cristal 3 Coronel Bolognesi 0; Dep Wanka 1 Alianza Atletico 0; Union Huaral 4 At Universidad 2; Melgar 2 Alianza Lima 0; Estudiantes 1 Universidad CV 1; Universitario 1 Sport Boys 0.
Dec 3: At Universidad 1 Universitario 0.
Dec 4: Universidad CV 1 Sport Boys 1; Sporting Cristal 6 Dep Wanka 1.
Dec 5: Alianza Atletico 1 Universidad SMP 4; Cienciano 1 Melgar 0; Coronel Bolognesi 1 Estudiantes 0; Alianza Lima 1 Union Huaral 1.
Dec 8: Estudiantes 0 Alianza Atletico 1; Universidad SMP 1 At Universidad 0; Sport Boys 1 Cienciano 1; Union Huaral 1 Coronel Bolognesi 2; Melgar 1 Sporting Cristal 2; Dep Wanka 3 Alianza Lima 2; Universitario 1 Universidad CV 1.
Dec 11: Sporting Cristal 4 Estudiantes 2; Universidad CV 1 Melgar 0.
Dec 12: Alianza Atletico 5 Sport Boys 0; Coronel Bolognesi 0 Universitario 0; Dep Wanka 1 Union Huaral 1; Alianza Lima 2 Universidad SMP 1; At Universidad 4 Cienciano 1.
Dec 15: Cienciano 4 Universidad CV 0; Sport Boys 2 At Universidad 2; Melgar 5 Dep Wanka 0; Universidad SMP 5 Coronel Bolognesi 2; Union Huaral 1 Sporting Cristal 2; Universitario 1 Alianza Atletico 1; Estudiantes 0 Alianza Lima 2 (awarded after Estudiantes withdrew).
Dec 17: Dep Wanka 0 Universidad SMP 2 (originally 1-0 but awarded 0-2 as punishment for Wanka's failure to pay off debts).
Dec 18: Alianza Lima 0 Sport Boys 1; Coronel Bolognesi 1 Cienciano 1.
Dec 19: Alianza Atletico 2 Universidad CV 1; Union Huaral 2 Estudiantes 0 (awarded); Sporting Cristal 4 Universitario 2; At Universidad 2 Melgar 2.
Dec 22: Alianza Lima 0 Universitario 2; Universidad SMP 2 Sporting Cristal 1; Universidad CV 1 At Universidad 0; Alianza Atletico 3 Cienciano 3; Melgar 0 Union Huaral 1; Dep Wanka 2 Estudiantes 0 (awarded); Sport Boys 5 Coronel Bolognesi 2.
Dec 24: Coronel Bolognesi 4 Universidad CV 1; Sporting Cristal 1 Sport Boys 3.
Dec 26: Estudiantes 0 Melgar 2 (awarded); Cienciano 2 Alianza Lima 2; Universitario 5 Dep Wanka 2; Union Huaral 0 Universidad SMP 1; At Universidad 0 Alianza Atletico 0.

PERU – CLOSING – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sporting Cristal	26	16	2	8	55	37	50
Univ SMP	26	14	5	7	40	26	47
Cienciano	26	11	11	4	41	26	44
Universitario	26	11	10	5	34	28	43
Alianza Atletico	26	12	6	8	41	34	42
Alianza Lima	26	10	8	8	31	23	38
Union Huaral	26	10	8	8	35	30	38
Sport Boys	26	10	7	9	38	40	37
At Universidad	26	8	9	9	37	38	33
Melgar	26	9	5	12	47	41	32
C Bolognesi	26	8	6	12	45	42	30
Univ CV	26	7	7	12	24	39	28
Dep Wanka	26	7	4	15	27	62	25
Estudiantes	26	3	4	19	19	48	13

OVERALL CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFF
(Opening winners v closing winners)

Dec 29
Alianza Lima 0
Sporting Cristal 0
Aet
Alianza Lima 5-4 on pens
Sent off: Villalta (Sporting Cristal)

URUGUAY

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP
Dec 4: Fenix 4 Rentistas 0; Cerrito 0 Wanderers 1.
Dec 5: Nacional 3 Penarol 2; Danubio 2 Liverpool 0; Defensor 1 Plaza 0.
Dec 8: Fenix 0 Defensor 0; Cerrito 2 Plaza 0; Penarol 1 Danubio 5; Liverpool 2 Rentistas 0; Nacional 0 Wanderers 0.

URUGUAY – CLOSING – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Danubio	9	7	1	1	17	6	22
Defensor	9	5	4	0	10	4	19
Nacional	9	4	3	2	18	12	15
Liverpool	9	5	0	4	17	12	15
Penarol	9	4	2	3	16	18	14
Rentistas	9	2	4	3	8	17	10
Fenix	9	2	3	4	16	16	9
Wanderers	9	2	3	4	6	9	9
Cerrito	9	2	2	5	11	16	8
Plaza	9	0	2	7	7	16	2

OVERALL CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFF
(Opening winners v closing winners)

1st leg
Dec 12 - Centenario stadium, Montevideo
Nacional 4 (Liguera 32, Mendez 41, 45, Coelho 85)
Danubio 1 (Risso 26)
HT: 3-1. **Ref:** Cabrera

2nd leg
Dec 15 - Jardines del Hipodromo stadium, Montevideo
Danubio 1 (Perrone 90)
Nacional 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Silvera
Sent off: G Rodriguez (Danubio) 84min
Danubio won overall championship. (As winners of the Tabla Anual – a League table based upon the combined results of both the opening and closing championships – Danubio had to win only one of the first two championship play-off legs to win the title. A potential third leg was not played because of this.)

VENEZUELA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP
Dec 4: Caracas 1 Dep Tachira 1.
Dec 5: Estudiantes 2 Ital-Chacao 2; Carabobo 3 Monagas 1; UA Maracaibo 2 ItalMaracaibo 0; Mineros Guayana 2 Trujillanos 2.
Dec 12: Ital-Chacao 2 Caracas 0; Trujillanos 2 Estudiantes 1; Monagas 1 UA Maracaibo 2; Dep Tachira 2 Carabobo 1; ItalMaracaibo 1 Mineros Guayana 3.

VENEZUELA – OPENING – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
UA Maracaibo	18	9	7	2	27	12	34
Caracas	18	9	5	4	23	19	32
Mineros G'ana	18	8	6	4	28	18	30
Dep Tachira	18	9	3	6	23	19	30
Trujillanos	18	8	5	5	21	16	29
Carabobo	18	4	9	5	23	25	21
Monagas	18	5	4	9	21	27	19
Estudiantes	18	4	5	9	24	31	17
ItalMaracaibo	18	4	5	9	18	30	17
Ital-Chacao	18	3	5	10	22	33	14

CENTRAL & NORTH AMERICA

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS CUP

Quarter-finals draw
DC United (USA) v Harbour View (Jam)
Kansas City Wizards (USA) v Saprissa (CR)
Monterrey (Mex) v Municipal (Gtm)
Olimpia (Hnd) v Pumas UNAM (Mex)
1st legs - Mar 9; 2nd legs - Mar 16

MEXICO

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP
Semi-finals

1st legs
Dec 1: Atlante 2 Monterrey 4.
Dec 2: Pumas UNAM 4 Atlas 3.

2nd legs
Dec 4: Monterrey 3 Atlante 1 *Monterrey 7-3 on agg.*
Dec 5: Atlas 1 Pumas UNAM 2 *Pumas 6-4 on agg.*

Final, 1st leg

Dec 8 - Olimpico Universitario stadium, Mexico City
Pumas UNAM 2 (Beltran 50, Toledo 81)
Monterrey 1 (Franco 21)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Morales

Final, 2nd leg

Dec 11 - Tecnologico stadium, Monterrey
Monterrey 0
Pumas UNAM 1 (Fonseca 47)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Archundia
Pumas 3-1 on agg

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Final, 1st leg

Dec 4 - Sousse
Etoile Sahel (Tun) 2 (Mhadhebi pen 44, Traore 53)
Enyimba (Nig) 1 (Nwanna 15)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Benouza (Alg)
Etoile Sahel: Ejide - Kalabane, Zouaghi, Miladi (El-Bokri 88), Hammi, Bargui, Baya, Mhadhebi (Jedidi 64), Sellemi, Opara, Traore. *Sent off: Sellemi 72min.*
Enyimba: Enyeama - Nwaneri, Aliyu, Ezoba, Omolade, Yusuf, Okonkwo, Tyavkase, Ogunbiyi (Frimpong 89), Nwanna (Udeh 47), Ezenwa (Fasindo 81). *Sent off: Okonkwo 31min.*

Final, 2nd leg

Dec 12 - Abuja
Enyimba 2 (Enyeama pen 43, Ogunbiyi 53)
Etoile Sahel 1 (Zouaghi 63)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Codjia (Ben)
Agg 3-3. Enyimba 5-3 on pens
Enyimba: Enyeama (Aiyenugba 89) - Nwaneri, Aliyu, Ezoba, Omolade, Yusuf, Tyavkase, Ogunbiyi, Udeh, Nwanna (Ezenwa 80), Anumnu (Frimpong 64).
Etoile Sahel: Ejide - Kalabane, Zouaghi, Miladi, Hammi, El-Bokri (Opara 46; Obiakor 54), Baya, Mhadhebi, Ben Frej, Ettraoui (Bargui 60), Traore.

2005 EDITION

Preliminary rnd draw

Ajax Cape Town (SAf) v Mhlambanyatsi Rovers (Swa) (Game 1)
Al Hilal (Sud) v Awassa Kenema (Eth) (2)
Al Olympique (Lby) v Renaissance (Chd) (3)
AS Aviacao (Ang) v Blue Waters (Nam) (4)
Asante Kotoko (Gha) v Wallidan (Gam) (5)*
ASC Diaraf (Sen) v Fello Star Labe (Gui) (6)
CAPS United (Zim) v Lesotho Defence Force (Les) (7)
DC Motema Pembe (DRC) v Rayon Sport (Rwa) (8)
Djoliba (Mli) v AS Douanes (Sen) (9)
Dolphin (Nig) v Renacimiento (EqG) (10)
FAR Rabat (Mor) v ACS Ksar (Mra) (11)
Kaizer Chiefs (SAf) v AS Port Louis (Mrs) (12)
La Passe (Sey) v USJF Ravinala (Mad) (13)
Racing Bafoussam (Cam) v Donjo (Ben) (14)
Red Arrows (Zam) v Diables Noirs (Con) (15)
Sagrada Esperanca (Ang) v Mangasport (Gab) (16)
SC Villa (Uga) v Adulis (Eri) (17)
Simba SC (Tan) v Ferroviario Nampula (Moz) (18)
TP Mazembe (DRC) v ASFA Yennega (BuF) (19)
Tusker (Ken) v KMKM (Zan) (20)
1st legs - Jan 28-30; 2nd legs - Feb 11-13

**Wallidan withdrawn by Gambian FA – Asante Kotoko walkover*

1st rnd draw

Game 2 winners v Esperance (Tun)
Game 3 winners v USM Alger (Alg)
Game 4 winners v Cotonsport (Cam)
Asante Kotoko v Game 11 winners
Game 6 winners v JS Kabylie (Alg)
Game 7 winners v Game 15 winners
Game 8 winners v Raja Casablanca (Mor)
Game 9 winners v Etoile Sahel (Tun)
Game 10 winners v Hearts of Oak (Gha)
Game 13 winners v Game 12 winners
Game 14 winners v Africa Sports (IvC)
Game 16 winners v ASEC Abidjan (IvC)
Game 17 winners v Al Ahly (Egy)
Game 18 winners v Enyimba (Nig)
Game 19 winners v Game 1 winners
Game 20 winners v Zamalek (Egy)
1st legs - Mar 4-6; 2nd legs - Mar 18-20

AFRICAN CONFEDERATION CUP

Final, 1st leg

Jan 2 - Accra
Hearts of Oak (Gha) 1 (Agyemang 90)
Asante Kotoko (Gha) 1 (Osei 61)
HT: 0-0

Final, 2nd leg

Jan 9 - Kumasi
Asante Kotoko 1 (Taylor 54)
Hearts of Oak 1 (Tetteh 81)
HT: 0-0
Agg 2-2. Hearts 8-7 on pens

2005 EDITION

Preliminary rnd draw

Armed Forces (Gam) v Cl Kamsar (Gui) (Game 1)*
USCA Foot (Mad) v Prisons SC (Tan) (2)
AS Nianan Koulikoro (Mli) v OC Khouribga (Mor) (3)
ASFB (BuF) v Al Ittihad (Lby) (4)
Banks (Eth) v Kenya Pipeline (Ken) (5)
BDF (Bot) v Sonangol Namibe (Ang) (6)
CS Cilu (DRC) v CO Bouafle (IvC) (7)
DUC (Sen) v COD Meknes (Mor) (8)
Ferroviario Maputo (Moz) v Motor Action (Zim) (9)
Gazelle (Chd) v FC 105 Libreville (Gab) (10)
Green Buffaloes (Zam) v APR FC (Rwa) (11)
Hearts of Lions (Gha) v ASAC Concorde (Mra) (12)**
King Faisal Babies (Gha) v Sierra Leone representatives (13)
Kipanga (Zan) v Kampala City Council (Uga) (14)
Mogas 90 (Ben) v AS Douanes (Tog) (15)
Red Star (Sey) v Savanne SC (Mrs) (16)
Sony Ela Nguema (EqG) v Muni Sport (Con) (17)
1st legs - Jan 28-30; 2nd legs - Feb 11-13

**Armed Forces withdrawn by Gambian FA – Cl Kamsar walkover*
***Hearts of Lions have withdrawn – ASAC Concorde walkover*

1st rnd draw

Cl Kamsar v Bendel Insurance (Nig)
Game 2 winners v Al Merreikh (Sud)
Game 3 winners v MC Oran (Alg)
Game 4 winners v JS Kairouan (Tun)
Game 5 winners v Al Mokawloon (Egy)
Game 6 winners v Saint-Eloi Lupopo (DRC)
Game 7 winners v Union Douala (Cam)
Game 8 winners v AS Marsa (Tun)
Game 9 winners v Ismaili (Egy)
Game 10 winners v Inter Clube (Ang)
ASAC Concorde v Bamboutos Mbouda (Cam)
Game 13 winners v ASC Ndiambour (Sen)
Game 14 winners v Game 11 winners
Game 15 winners v Stella (IvC)
Game 16 winners v SuperSport United (SAf)
Game 17 winners v Enugu Rangers (Nig)
1st legs - Mar 4-6; 2nd legs - Mar 18-20

CAMEROON

CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cotonsport	14	9	3	2	30	9	30
Racing B'ssam	14	8	4	2	18	6	28
Union Douala	14	7	5	2	18	13	26
Bamboutos	14	3	8	3	8	7	17
Fovu Baham	14	3	4	7	9	18	13
Sable Batie*	14	3	6	5	14	19	12
Canon Yaounde	14	2	5	7	4	17	11
Tonnerre Y'de	14	2	3	9	10	22	9

**3pts deducted for not showing for Round 5 game*

IVORY COAST

IVORY COAST – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ASEC Abidjan	26	21	5	0	60	7	68
Africa Sports*	26	15	9	2	38	16	48
Stella Club	26	11	10	5	32	21	43
JCA	26	8	11	7	34	25	35
Sabe Sports	26	8	11	7	21	18	35
Stade Abidjan	26	8	10	8	25	28	34
Reveil Club	26	9	7	10	24	31	34
CO Bouafle	26	7	10	9	24	26	31
Satellite FC	26	9	4	13	22	42	31
Denguele	26	6	12	8	24	27	30
Sewe Sport	26	7	8	11	20	30	29
Entente S'tive	26	6	9	11	21	37	27
CO Korhogo	26	5	6	15	22	42	21
Man FC	26	2	8	16	17	37	14

**6pts deducted for non-payment of former coach*

NIGERIA

NIGERIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dolphin	34	19	5	10	44	30	62
Enyimba	34	18	6	10	44	24	60
Bendel Ins'ance	34	17	5	12	45	29	56
Kano Pillars	34	17	5	12	43	27	56
Iwuanyanwu	34	17	5	12	31	23	56
Enugu Rangers	34	14	10	10	28	21	52
Lobi Stars	34	15	5	14	44	34	50
Gombe Utd	34	15	3	16	30	40	48
Gabros Intl	34	14	5	15	23	27	47
Shooting Stars	34	14	5	15	39	47	47
Ports Authority	34	14	4	16	35	35	46
Julius Berger	34	13	7	14	36	37	46
Niger Tornadoes	34	14	4	16	27	32	46
EK Warriors	34	14	4	16	25	37	46
Wikki Tourists	34	14	3	17	36	42	45
Kwara Utd	34	12	6	16	37	43	42
Plateau Utd	34	8	11	15	26	36	35
Mighty Jets	34	7	7	20	20	49	28

SENEGAL

SENEGAL – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ASC Diaraf	38	20	12	6	54	22	72
AS Douanes	38	19	12	7	37	16	69
ASEC Nd'bour	38	19	8	11	29	20	65
DUC	38	18	9	11	41	27	63
SONACOS	38	14	17	7	32	19	59
CSS	38	13	16	9	29	25	55
US Rail	38	14	13	11	36	36	55
US Goree	38	13	15	10	32	21	54
Jeanne d'Arc	38	13	14	11	41	26	53
Port Autonome	38	13	13	12	29	26	52
Casa Sport	38	15	7	16	23	22	52
Guediawaye	38	12	16	10	35	38	52
ASC HLM	38	11	18	9	26	22	51
US Ouakam	38	11	15	12	27	27	48
Stade Mbour	38	10	16	12	24	29	46
ASC Saloum	38	12	10	16	29	36	46
Linguere	38	11	12	15	19	26	45
ASC Khombole	38	8	6	24	17	50	30
ASC Police	38	4	16	18	19	46	28
ASFA	38	3	9	26	11	56	18

ASIA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group stage draw

Group A: Pas (Irn), Al Shorta (Irq), Al Salmia (Kuw), Al Rayyan (Qat).
Group B: Al Ain (UAE), Sepahan (Irn), Al Shabab (Sau), Al Wahda (Syr).
Group C: Neftchi (Uzb), Al Ahli (UAE), Al Sadd (Qat), Al Kuwait (Kuw).
Group D: Al Zawra'a (Irq), Pakhtakor (Uzb), Al Jaish (Syr), Al Ahli (Sau).
Group E: Shenzhen Jianlibao (Chn), Suwon Bluewings (SKo), Hoang Anh Gia Lai (Vie), Jubilo Iwata (Jap).
Group F: BEC Tero Sasana (Tha), Shandong Luneng (Chn), Yokohama F Marinos (Jap), PSM Makasaar (Ins).
Group G: Busan I.cons (SKo), Krung Thai Bank (Tha), Persebaya Surabaya (Ins), Binh Dinh (Vie).

Matches start Mar 9; group winners qualify for quarter-finals
Bye to quarter-finals: Al Ittihad (Sau; defending champions)

AFC CUP

Group stage draw

Group A: Al Faisaly (Jor), Muktijoddha (Ban), East Bengal (Ind), Nebitchi (Tkm).
Group B: Al Ahed (Leb), Al Hussein (Jor), Dempo (Ind).
Group C: Brothers Union (Ban), Nijmeh (Leb), Asudalyk (Tkm).
Group D: Perak (Mly), Valencia (Mdv), Sun Hei (HK), Tampines Rovers (Sin).
Group E: New Radiant (Mdv), Pahang (Mly), Home United (Sin), Happy Valley (HK).

Matches start Mar 9; group winners and the three best runners-up qualify for quarter-finals

CHINA

CHINA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shenzhen	22	11	9	2	30	13	42
Shandong	22	10	6	6	44	29	36
Shanghai Intl	22	8	8	6	39	31	32
Liaoning	22	10	2	10	39	40	32
Dalian*	22	10	6	6	33	26	30
Tianjin	22	7	8	7	28	29	29
Beijing Hyundai*	22	8	7	7	35	33	28
Shenyang	22	7	5	10	23	29	26
Sichuan	22	4	11	7	29	37	23
Shanghai S'hua	22	4	10	8	28	37	22
Qingdao	22	4	9	9	21	28	21
Chongqing	22	4	9	9	14	31	21

**Dalian and Beijing Hyundai had 6pts and 3pts deducted respectively for pitch walk-offs*

JAPAN

CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFF

(First Stage winners v Second Stage winners)

1st leg

Dec 5 - International stadium, Yokohama
Yokohama F Marinos 1 (Kawai 67)
Urawa Reds 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 64,899

2nd leg

Dec 11 - Saitama stadium, Saitama
Urawa Reds 1 (Alex 77)
Yokohama F Marinos 0
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **Att:** 59,715
Sent off: Nakanishi (Marinos) 77min; Emerson (Reds) 118min
Agg 1-1. Marinos 4-2 on pens

EMPEROR'S CUP – Final

Jan 1 - National stadium, Tokyo
Tokyo Verdy 1969 2 (Iio 36, Hiramoto 54)
Jubilo Iwata 1 (Nishi 78)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 50,233
Sent off: Kobayashi (Verdy) 45min

SOUTH KOREA

CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS

(First and Second Stage winners plus the two teams with most points overall apart from the stage winners)

Semi-finals

Dec 5: Suwon 1 Chunnam 0; Pohang 1 Ulsan 0.

Final, 1st leg

Dec 8 - Pohang
Pohang 0
Suwon 0

Final, 2nd leg

Dec 12 - World Cup stadium, Suwon
Suwon 0
Pohang 0
Att: 36,000
Agg 0-0. Suwon 4-3 on pens

the Knowledge

everything you need to know about...

kit colours

If it's good enough for Notts County...Juventus show their East Midlands influence

JUVENTUS famously chose their black-and-white-striped shirts after a club member, John Savage, returned from a trip to England in 1903. He had been so impressed by Notts County's strip that he took a set of kits back to Italy.

Athletic Bilbao were formed in 1901 from the merger of Bilbao FC, a team founded by English foundry workers from Sunderland, and another club, Athletic. The new club adopted the red-and-white-striped shirts of their hometown club, Sunderland. Atletico Madrid originally borrowed the red-and-white-striped shirts of Athletic Bilbao.

Leeds originally played in a strip of blue and gold, but changed to their now familiar all-white after manager Don Revie decided to copy Real Madrid's famous kit.

River Plate started out in white shirts, but so many of their early opponents also wore white that they decided to sew on a red diagonal sash, a style that continues to this day.

Until the 1960s Liverpool played in red shirts and white shorts, but manager Bill Shankly switched to all red in a bid to make the team more intimidating.

'Bill Shankly switched the Liverpool team to play in all red in a bid to make them more intimidating'

Saint-Etienne were founded by grocer Geoffrey Guichard, the man behind Casino, one of France's biggest chains of shops and supermarkets. The shop colours were green and white, so it was natural the team should follow suit.

Corinthians of Brazil started out wearing cream shirts, but the quality of the cloth was poor and the colours soon ran after a few washes, until the shirts became white. They had no money to buy new shirts, so they continued to play in white.

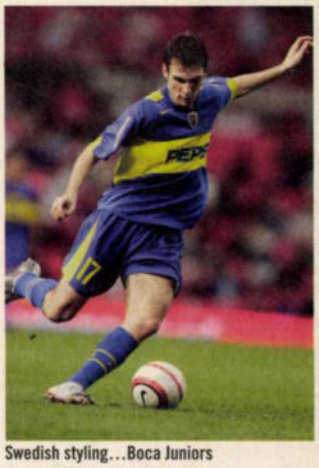
PSV Eindhoven were founded in 1913 and their colours of red and white stripes decided upon during that historic meeting. The white was from the linen tablecloth in the room, the red from a bottle of lemonade on the table. The club's first president, Mr Hofkes, was a teetotaller, hence the lemonade.

The founders of Cerro Porteno, Paraguay's most popular club, were split between the country's two main political parties. One group wanted the shirts to be red, in honour of the Partido Colorado; the other wanted blue, in honour of the Partido Liberal. They reached a splendid compromise – red and blue stripes.

Italy's national side have always played in all blue, the colour of the royal house of Savoy, the country's original royal family.

Le Havre were founded in 1872 by a group of Oxbridge graduates. The club's navy blue and sky blue halved shirts reflect the traditional colours of the two universities.

The founders of Boca Juniors were unable to decide on kit colours, so agreed to adopt the national colours



Swedish styling...Boca Juniors

of the next ship to sail up the River Plate. The ship was Swedish, hence Boca's strip of blue and yellow.

Dinamo Moscow owe their blue and white strip to Blackburn Rovers fans Harry and Clement Charnock, whose family ran the Morozov cotton mills in Moscow and kitted out the club at the tail-end of the 19th century.

Slavia Prague's red and white halves with a red star were taken from the independent Czech flag in 1892.

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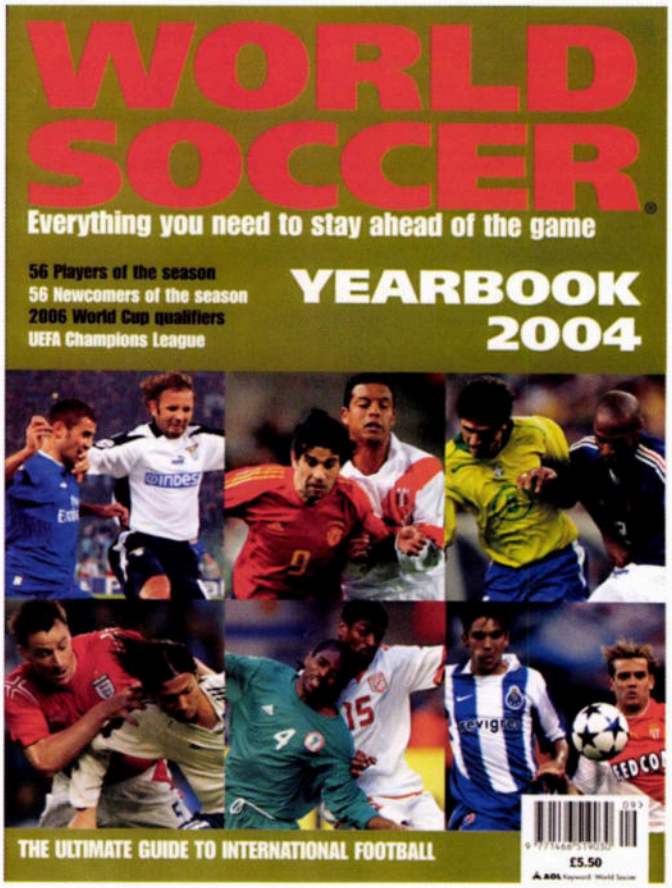

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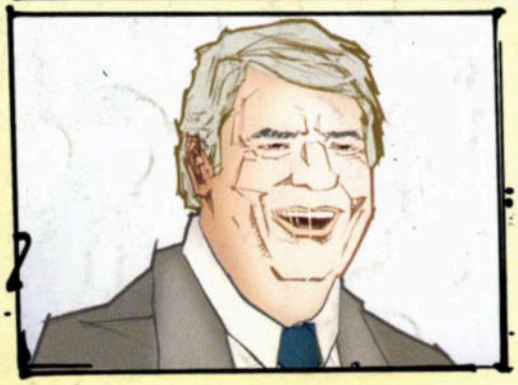

HEIGHT: GIANT
AGE: IMMORTAL

GAFFER OF (CHECK IT OUT): SOUTHAMPTON, SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY, GRIMSBY TOWN, DONCASTER ROVERS, NORTHERN IRELAND, ASSISTANT MANAGER OF ENGLAND AND MANAGER OF ENGLAND Bs AND UNDER 21s.

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